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VOL. VII

OCTOBER 1981

NO. 4

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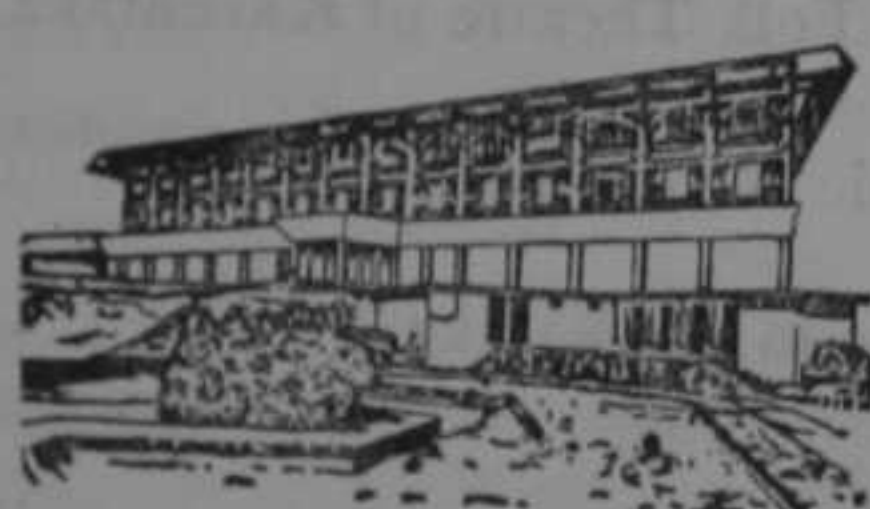
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## The Dance Revolution in the West

By

KUM. ALARMEL VALLI, M.A.\*

*Oh, East is East, and West is West.....  
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's  
great Judgement Seat;  
But there is neither East nor West, Border,  
nor Breed, nor Birth  
When two strong men stand face to face,  
though they come from the ends of the earth!*

—Rudyard Kipling

Ours is an age of war and political strife, with countries divided by sharply conflicting interests. Yet, never before has there been such an easy flow of ideas and ideals between them. With air travel drastically reducing distances, with education broadening one's outlook, cultural barriers have fast crumbled down. And Dance, which speaks a universal language, has played a key role in bringing about this happy state of affairs.

The impact of Indian thought on Western culture can be traced to very early days—as far back as the Greek civilisation. Since then, Indian art, philosophy and literature have profoundly stirred and influenced some of the greatest thinkers and artists of the Western world. In this context, Indian contribution to the dance art of the west is particularly relevant. Ballets and operas like "the Bayaderes" and Nijinsky's "the Blue God" drew extensively from the wealth of myths and legends that form such an essential part of Indian life. Witnessing a performance of Antonio Gadesa, Spain's

leading Flamenco dancer, I was startled by its close parallel to Kathak from which it has evidently drawn in abundant measure.

### Dance Revolution in the West

Today, more than ever, Eastern and Indian thought and ideals have largely inspired the Dance revolution which is taking place in the West. Dance in Europe and America has become an integral part of the popular art scene. There is a growing interest in the rediscovery of movement as a mode of theatrical expression. Modern dance techniques have progressively veered away from those of classical ballet towards Yoga and naturalistic movement, based on the advantages and disadvantages of the human body and accepting as natural, gravitational pull on it. Indian Dance, which already works on these principles and which contains myriad shades of emotion and a complex gesture language offers tremendous scope to the modern dancer and choreographer. Those I have met in the course of my tours abroad, have always expressed their

\* Alarmel Valli, a top exponent of the grand Pandanallur style of Bharata Natya and trained by Nattakalanidhi Chokkalingam Pillal himself, has danced her way into the major Capitals of the world, not to speak of India. A landmark in her career was her performance at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow in 1977. The International Cultural festival in Paris organised by the Sarah Bernhardt Theatre De La Ville gave 16-year old Valli her introduction to Europe and America. She

conducted a Seminar on Bharata Natyam at the request of Academy Filarmonica. She has been invited to take part in the International Cultural Festival to be held in Vienna early in 1982.

Of her art India's veteran Statesman, Sri K.P.S. Menon had this to say: "A single long-stemmed rose, full blown and exquisite, combining nuances of colour, form and fragrance to form the perfect whole, held in a vase of the finest cut-glass".



deepest admiration for our art and often a desire to enrich their experience and talent by studying it.

### Indian Art in Europe

Consumer Societies in the West, with their predominantly materialistic approach to life, have now become acutely aware of the spiritual void that such a system creates. Indian art, therefore with its deep, spiritual magnetic core has a very great attraction for them. Today, votaries of Bharata Natyam, Kathakali, Orissi, Kathak, and the other styles can be found in the remotest corners of Europe and America. One of my happiest memories is of dancing in a little mountain village in Italy, on a stage erected in an exquisite old square overlooking the hills. Important Festivals like the Edinburgh Festival, Berlin and Avignon have started featuring Indian art as an integral part of their programmes. Besides, Indian music and dance are studied in many of the major universities of the world. I found my sixty old students, young and old, at the Seminar Organised by the Philharmonic Society of Rome, no less ardent and devoted to Bharata Natyam than Indians.

### Thoroughness in Presentation

If the west is now awake to the beauty of our art, Indian dancers too, thanks to constant exposure to Western audiences and theatre discipline, have gained from the experience. In the field of sleek and elegant programme presentation, we have much to learn. The International Festival of Dance and Music at the Theatre de la Ville in Paris gave me my 'first taste' of their relentless discipline. No less than five rehearsals to check the lights, timing, positioning exits, entrances and sound and nearly ten hours of gruelling work went into the near flawless presentation of our varied items—the results were indeed well worth the effort, demanding as it was!

### The Best Audience

But having danced in most of the countries of the world, I still maintain that the best audience for Indian dance is a gathering of true connoisseurs and rasikas of Indian Classical Music, however small in number. The rapport that then exists between the dancer and the spectator is something vital and spontaneous. But at times, faced with crowds of restless, gossiping women, unruly children and squalling infants, I have thought with nostalgia of the reverent, eerie silence of a Bolshoi audience, of their overwhelming response, their untiring standing ovations or the excited cries of "Bravo and Bis and Tutti Bravi" of a Philharmonic crowd, which can be as heady as champagne. Theirs is an enthusiasm, tempered by taste and discrimination with a keen interest and a desire for knowledge that I find heart-warming.

### An Evolving Art

Dance in the west has been constantly changing and evolving. Its meanings and motifs have been reassessed and given new expression. Its development has been phenomenal, with several new forms of dance emerging at the same time, in keeping with the hectic pace and rhythm of twentieth century life.

It is most significant, in this context, that to this day, Indian classical dance, with an antiquity of several thousand years, remains a vital and highly relevant art form—the reasons for its permanency are not hard to define. Our culture is based almost entirely on tradition, as is our dance art—a tradition that fosters rather than constrains growth and development. And through the medium of narrative, through poetry and drama, the dance conveys an entire philosophy of life, portrays universal emotions and eternal values, thereby offering infinite scope to the creative artist, whether from the East or West.

## Bharat Natyam the Generations



Dr. T. BALASARASWATHY



Smt. NIRMALA RAMACHANDRAN



(Late) Smt. G. KAUSALYA



Kum. ALARMEL VALLI



## Scope of Abhinaya in Padas

By

NATYA KALA BHUSHANAM Smt. NIRMALA RAMACHANDRAN

Abhinaya - the art of conveying an idea or theme through facial expressions, hand gestures and body movements - is one of the most interesting aspects of Bharathanatyam, taking us to a world of imagination. The padams of traditional composers constitute a rich repertoire in the sphere of dance. The sahitya of Padas with their latent ideas gives ample scope for imaginative interpretation of a particular theme in a very effective manner. Hence Padas which belong to the realm of dance music treat of the varied aspects of Nayaka, Nayaki relationships. One of the outstanding features of Indian culture has been the development of the idea of Sringara to a great degree of soulful perfection. Works on Rasas or Sentiments like Bhanudatta's 'Rasa Manjari' and Amaruka's 'Sringara Sataka' deal exhaustively with Rasa and Sringara. Sringara being universal in its appeal and capable of admitting various other emotions like jealousy, sorrow, anxiety and indignation has appealed to many a pada composer, accounting for the profusion of padas on the theme of love.

### The Padam

Whereas a kirtana seeks to reach God through praise, the pada seeks to attain the goal through love. The time-honoured convention in all these songs has been that the human soul represented by the dancer (Nayaki) yearns for the Supreme Being (Nayaka). Jayadeva's Gita Givinda which is based on the nayaka-nayaki motif served

as a beacon light to many composers of pada.

### Kshetragna

Of the traditional pada composers, Kshetragna is considered to be unrivalled in the portrayal of the psychological and emotional changes in the minds of men and women. Kshetragna who belonged to the 17th century was a prolific composer having more than 4500 padams to his credit. Kshetragna padas are rich in raga and rasa bhava and are full of depth and feeling. Abounding in poetic thoughts, there is a pada of Kshetragna for every conceivable situation in life. Mainly, rakthi ragas are used to heighten the emotional appeal. Other prominent Telugu composers are Sarangapani, Ganam Sinayya, Virabhadrayya, Muvvalur Sabhapathi Iyer and Merattur Venkatrama Sastri who modelled their padas on the lines of Kshetragna, with rich emotional content. Of the Tamil composers, mention may be made of Ganam Krishnier, Subbarama Iyer, Papavinasa Mudaliar, Muthu Thandavar and Gopalakrishna Bharathi.

When a Pada is taken up for Abhinaya, the main mood and import of the sahitya must be understood for effective portrayal. The feelings and experiences of a devotee in quest of God and that of the Nayaki yearning for the Nayaka are corresponding ones and these are immortalised in the padas. Nayakis and Nayakas have been classified according to their nature, status and experience. There are also the 8

types of Nayakis according to the state of mood in which they are placed like Swadinapathika, Vasaka Sajjika, Virahothkanditha, Vipralabdha, Kanditha, Kalahantharitha, Proshithabarthruka and Abhisarika.

The art of Abhinaya which flowers in Padams enables the dancer to demonstrate her creative faculties by interpreting

the main mood and latent ideas contained in the sahitya. A Bharathanatyam dancer enacts the part of all the characters that she is relating, with nothing to aid her save the language of the Mudras, facial expressions and her own artistic imagination, thus making Abhinaya one of the most sophisticated and suggestive arts of the world.

## Music for Bharata Natya

By

N. R. BHUVARAHAN

Art Critic, "THE HINDU"

Fragmented images in art, capsule concerts of Carnatic music and truncated programmes in Bharata Natya have made considerable inroads into our cultural mores, distorting our sense of values and spiritual moorings. For a critic who has been privileged to watch the classic recitals of Bhanumathi and Varalakshmi of Kumbakonam, Pandanallur Jayalakshmi, Pattu and Saranayaki and Balasaraswati (to mention a few) the present-day performers (excepting very few) lack musical awareness and aesthetic approach.

### Hoary Tradition

If among the various dance systems of India, (Bharata Natya, Kathakali, Kathak, Kuchipudi and Orissi) Bharata Natya has evoked the admiration of Americans, Europeans and Russians, it is primarily due to its intense appeal and intrinsic worth, as a fascinating art form drenched in classical music. For Sarangadeva has said: "Geetam, Vadyam and Nrithyam, constitute music". Its hoary antiquity could be traced to the bronze dancing girl of Mohenjodaro (3,000

B.C.) to the recent past of the great Chola rulers of Tanjore, four hundred years ago, who ceded lands and houses to dancing girls and Nattuvanars. We still have a 'Nattuvam Chavadi' in Tanjore. Its spiritual quality fused with classical music, capable of expressing the whole gamut of human emotions, and a systematised vocabulary of gestures, are its enduring virtues.

### Pioneers and Path-Finders

Social reformers who viewed it as something immoral and untouchable, started the anti-nautch movement, which strangely enough had support from official quarters, and sought to kill it. But, due to the tireless efforts of pioneers like E. Krishna Aiyar and Smt. Rukmini Devi from the twenties, the prejudices had been removed and we are witnessing a renaissance of this art from 1932 onwards, after an exciting press controversy over the advisability of its revival. In this revival one feels that its standards are slowly being whittled down to suit the whims of globe trotters, tourist agencies, hoteliers,



Music Sabhas, time-conditioned music festivals and a hungry public too impatient to watch a full classical programme. With the result, we have mini-shows, in which even the varnams are eliminated.

### Rich Legacy

We have a rich textual tradition of great classical treatises and musical wealth of illustrious composers, who have bequeathed to us a treasure trove of Pada Varnas, Padams, Javalis and Tillanas. We owe our compact programme to the skill, ingenuity, knowledge and individuality, of the Tanjore Quartette, (Ponniiah, Chinniah, Sivanandam and Vadivelu) the sons of Subbaroya Nattuvanar, who was patronised by king Thulaja of Tanjore. The brothers codified and evolved a programme for the recitals which is observed even to-day (in an abbreviated way, with changes of names and musical content). It consists of ten primary adavus (adaivus) with permutation of 12 bedhas, resulting in 120 adavus which form the basic steps of Bharata Natya. The dance began with Alarippu, followed by Jatiswaram, Sabdham, Pada Varnam, Swarajati, Padam, Javali, Ragamalika, Slokam and Tillana. For these musical forms, the brothers have given us numerous compositions in Telugu and Tamil. Any dancer worth her salt should implicitly render these pieces if the recital has to acquire classical stature and provide aesthetic satisfaction.

### Musical Content

While every aspect of Natya has gained in importance like seating of musicians, costumes of the danseuse, lighting and stage decoration including a bronze Nataraja (mostly papier mache) the elaborate commentaries on items, the musical content and worth has shrunk to an alarming level, both in content and quality. Instead

of a full-fledged classical programme, covering all aspects, we often witness a hotch-potch like mini-ballets, occasionally Marwari, Gypsy, Garba, Naga and other trivia filling the bill, providing much amusement. These should be mercilessly cut, if classical Natya is to sustain its graces and subtle nuances.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of Bharata Natya is its rich, musical fare. Even in an absolute dance like Tandava, which is performed to the accompaniment of pure jatis (rhythmical syllables) the words are sung to particular notes. In the musical compositions used in dancing, one has to reckon with three aspects, music, rhythm and sahitya. A musical composition intended to be merely sung in a concert and a composition for dance, can be easily distinguished. While all compositions intended for concerts must and do possess a high musical value, it is not so in the case of dance forms. Barring Pada Varnas, Padas and Javalis, the rest of the items like Jatiswaram, Sabdam and Tillana have more rhythmic passages of swaras, sollukattus and thirmanas, than pure musical content.

### Improvisation

In dance music there is always scope for interpolation of intricate patterns of Jatis for foot-work with hand gestures. We often note the Nattuvanar reeling off passages of Jatis in cross rhythms and the danseuse performing to these Jatis. While cross rhythms are occasional in concert music, they are a regular feature of dance recitals. A composition taken for exposition may be in four-time measure and in the middle, the Nattuvanar may plange into a passage of Jatis in triple time and revert to the original theme later on at the appropriate place. The danseuse has to be

wary and forget the erstwhile rhythm for the time being and perform to the new rhythm. We have a plethora of Jatis (sollukattus and swaras) which are an integral feature of dance items like Alarippu, Jatiswaram, Sabdam, Swara-jati, Pada Varnam and Tillana.

### Plagiarised Versions

It is a regrettable feature of recent times that many classical Pada Varnas, Javalis, Tillanas, slokas from "Krishna Leela Tarangini", "Krishna Karnamritha" and "Ashtapadis" have been elbowed out to make room for the creations of a modern composer generally lacking in musical efficiency and erudition. At best, he is a poetaster or versifier, who belongs to the charming inner circles of the AIR, T.V., or Governmental agency, or institutions. One sighs in vain to see the danseuse performing for classic Varnas like "Danike" in Todi, "Ni sati Doralari" in Bhairavi, "Sami Ni Rammanave" in Khamas, "Samini Namminam" in Edukulakambodi, or the magnificent Swarajati "Emayaladina" (Emandayanara) in Huseni (to pick out at random from Balasaraswati's formidable repertoire). To crown all this, we see a plagiarised version of the famous "Viriboni", a Tana Varna, taken up for Varnam, by the danseuse.

### Forgotten Pieces

Very rarely do we see the danseuse doing Abinaya for pieces like "Manchi Dinamu" "Upamuga", "Evvade", "Neyyamuga", "Merathopu" or "Kontegadu". The slow tempo of the padams of Kshetragna or Sapathiah, is ideally suited for delineation of raga rasa and sanchari bhava, in all its colourful aspects for elaboration in gesture language. These are generally couched in rakthi ragas like Anandabhairvi, Edukulakambodi, Mukhari, Sankarabharana, Ghanta, Sahana and Surati, capable of evoking instant emotional appeal.

### Rhythm, the Pivot

The pivotal aspects of Bharata Natya are rhythm in the first half and gesture language, rich with bhava, in the later items, with the exception of the Tillana. The abhinaya for sloka, padya and Viruttam, is devoid of rhythm, because it is an exposition of the different emotional states of mind. But, Jatis and swaras of variegated beauty, are coined with syllables like ta, dhi, tom, nam, taka tari kita, naka, tom, ta dhin gin natom etc; which make the dance vigorous, lively and aesthetic.

For the padams and Javalis, we have a rich repertoire in Tamil and Telugu, from composers like Swati Tirunal, Kshetranya, Sabhapathiyya, Seenaiyya, Melattur Venkatarama Sastri, Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar. Vaideeswarankoil Subbarama Aiyar, Dharmapuri Subbarayar, Sarangapani, Pattabhiramayya and Tirupathi Narayanaswami Naidu (to mention a select few). The time measures used are mostly Misra chapu, Adi, Rupaka and Jampa, but there is a masterly creation of a Tillana in Simhanandana tala (128 aksharas) by Maha Vaidyanatha Aiyar, or a Lakshmi tala Tillana in Kapi, by Poochi Iyengar.

### Kuravanjis

For the creative artist, who wants to break new ground, we have classical Kuravanji's like "Sarabhendra Bhupala Kuravanji", staged by Balasaraswathi, "Kuravanji" by Kalakshetra troupe and "Azhagar Kuravanji" by Vijayantimala and disciples and other themes, which could be choreographed into a Ballet with classical dance music woven into it. Bharata Natyam in essence is devotional in spirit and spiritual in outlook, as it is dedicated to Lord Nataraja, the Dancing Shiva. Ananda Coomaraswami has described the Dancing Shiva as "the clearest image of the activity of God of which any religion can boast". Let us then be worthy exponents of our great cultural heritage.



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## Karnataka Bani in Music

By

Flute T. R. MAHALINGAM (MALI)

The subject viz., Karnataka Bani is rather a difficult subject to do proper justice to, but nevertheless one that it is time someone said something about, at some length and in some detail. For progress is a queer sort of horse, indeed somewhat unpredictable in its pace, a trifle erratic in the course it takes. It is apt to fancy itself in a sudden gallop at times in so spirited and determined a manner that it is apt to forget rein and saddle for a while and end up by straying to an extent from the set course. I cannot with any justice talk of 'progress in Art' until I have well defined for myself what Progress really is and what Art stands for; but I think I can, with some degree of confidence, point out when Art has begun to strain at the moorings; when it has ceased to have any reasonable regard for its own context; when it has come to ignore that on which it had, right from the beginning, been sustaining itself; when, intent on a florid display of flowers, too short to stay, it has come to care less and less for the sturdy strength of its roots.

Music, as a Fine Art, is supposed to be in its heyday now. If it is, I will not be behindhand wishing god-speed, but, at the same time, I cannot help entertaining a few inward misgivings, vague but insistent, that tell me that all is not as well indeed with it as well can be. For one thing it is, to a certain extent, not very sure of itself. It is a bit diffident, unfocussed, groping and uncertain of a direction. *It has gained*

*in impetus without gaining in real value; and while half that impetus is spent and gone, its value still remains what it has been. It has become more and more demonstrative, and, in proportion less and less inspired. Attention is devoted more to cultivate the spectacular than to delineate the sublime: In learning a few tricks and fancy turns that aim to please and to dazzle, the more vital elements of Art are either summarily dispensed with or at best cursorily cultivated.*

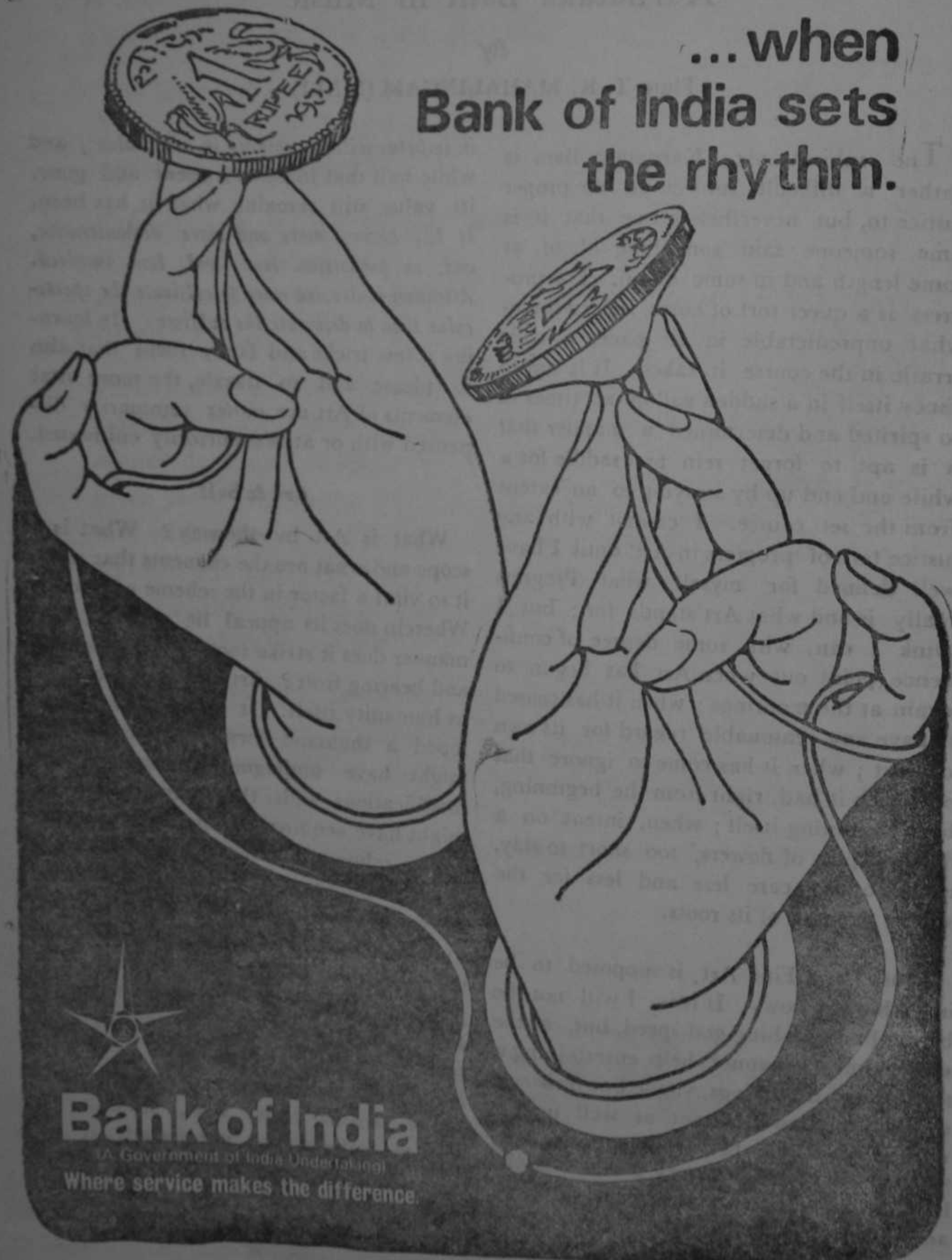
### Art & Self

What is Art by the way? What is its scope and what are the elements that make it so vital a factor in the scheme of things? Wherein does its appeal lie and in what manner does it strike root before budding and bearing fruit? Art could be as ancient as humanity itself. It might have developed a thousand forms as it evolved, it might have undergone a hundred little modifications with the passage of time, might have acquired strength from cultivation, refinement from culture, but in its scope, its purpose, it has remained constant, the various forms being strictly subservient to its needs, surviving or becoming extinct only according to whether they served its purpose or not. I deny as emphatically as I can that Art stops with self-expression, as some maintain. *Self-expression should be in the setting of a more universal expression to be of any artistic value.* Else, standing all alone, unrelated and unREFERRED, it will tend to become rather eccentric and devoid of substance.



# Money sounds beautiful

... when  
Bank of India sets  
the rhythm.



## The Components

Now, this is an aspect which cannot be emphasized too much. Art, as I understand it, is an aesthetic expression of the self in the context of the Universal, through a sensory medium. On this idea I wish to develop the idea of Bani. Let us look into it a bit more closely: the sensory medium, the artist, his context, these three are the components of an artistic effect. Applying it to Music in general, we may analyse it into corresponding components. First, there is the entirely melodic part of it which can be aesthetic by itself. Musical notes by themselves can please, and by merely manipulating a succession of notes concordant with one another, a definite aesthetic effect can be produced. But being aesthetic does not necessarily imply being artistic. In and through the aesthetic effect of the notes, the artist wears a part of himself, which may be called his personality or his self. Much in the same way sound is the medium for the aesthetic effect of pure notes, that aesthetic serves as a medium for the expression of a personality. The chain does not end there. There is something else, a background against which that personality is defined, a context in which it has evolved, that employs the personality as its medium in its turn. Melody through notes, a personality through the melody, and a context through the personality, such I take to be a very progressive analysis of Art. Art gains in value and depth only according as how much of the three components it is able to reflect, and how well.

This idea now affords us a way of stating what Bani is. To call it Style will be insufficient. *Bani is style plus something. Style is that which reflects the personality component, if I may so put it, while Bani is that which reflects the context component.* Style is

the peculiarity of the individual, while Bani is the peculiarity of the Universal, of which the individual is a part. Considered in this light, Bani admits of a variety of classes depending on the concept and degree of universality. Let us consider a little more closely the concepts of self-expression and expression of the context.

## Personality & Expression

Personality is that which is peculiar to a man. In it are fused together his emotions, his intellect, and what I shall call for want of a better word, his self. Self-expression is simply an expression of that personality. In it are revealed the depth of his feelings, the intensity of his passions, the keenness of his intellect, the reach and scope of his imagination, the thousand little marks of intelligence that give it sparkle, the degree of refinement he has attained, his capacity for absorbing and reflecting what is aesthetic, and many other factors too numerous to mention. Not that all artists express themselves completely. *It is indeed a moot question whether any artist worth his salt has ever expressed himself completely to his satisfaction, whether he has ever disburdened himself entirely to his relief and happiness.*

But an artistic tendency can definitely be discerned where there is something to be expressed and where there is a definite longing to express it. An artist, like any other man, is the result of a number of factors among which he has evolved. His self is naturally conditioned by the environment in which he has had his making. Further, every artist is sensitive to it to a degree. Now expressing or reflecting the characteristics which he has developed from his context is one thing, and reflecting the dominant characteristics of the context itself is another. Sometimes, of course, the two may fuse together, in



which case we may say that the artist has become one with his context. Instead of reflecting himself against his background, he has now successfully identified himself with it.

### The Context of Development

Now what exactly are the bounds of this context? This depends. Context is something that cannot be strictly demarcated. It is something that is capable of expansion. It may become wider as the artist grows. He may transcend during his evolution the limitation of a successive series of contexts and may probably push the barriers to an extent never before done. Proceeding from the immediate to the further, we have successively the familiar ideas of community, district, province, nation, humanity, and so on and so forth. The extent to which his sense of the context is developed depends on the extent to which he is able to perceive the unity of things. One who realizes the province as one unit has certainly less scope than one who perceives the entire mankind as one unit. The extent he perceives, understands, and reflects the context, measures the universality of his Art. We have as a result, a variety of artists whose impact varies with the conceptions of their contexts simultaneously with the degree to which they have individually cultivated

their artistic susceptibilities. In other words, we have a variety of artists who can be classified according to their Bani and their style. This is a very simple statement indeed but contains much that has to be properly assimilated.

### 'Dakshina Bani'

By 'Karnataka Bani' therefore, we can mean that which reflects the soil of the Karnataka, the original name for South India. 'Dakshina Bani' will, I think, suit the sense better. It should reflect that which is peculiarly South Indian, the characteristic make-up of the people populating the South. Not that it will be much different from that which dominates the people of the North or other parts. But still there are found some differences that characterize the South as a whole which find a reflection in the Bani adopted.

This gives rise to the question: where can such a Bani be found? Musicians are many. So are styles. In the same way, artists too are many, of varying degrees of capacity. Well, to go still deeper, the very question of 'conception' will arise.

*It is not necessary for music to be Consistently beautiful in order to possess merit or to be great—Suzanne K. Langar.*

—o—

## The Relationship of Man with Music\*

By

DR. M. R. GAUTAM

(Vice - Chancellor, Khairagarh University, M. P.)

### Melody

What is music in its fundamental sense?

Could it be defined as an *eidetic* art of the material resources exemplified in subjective processes qua pure possibilities? Because from primitive man onwards, music was used as a means to express an idea, depending on his qualitative apprehension of the resources at his disposal and the modes of symbolism he evolved from them. In the beginning, the idea was expressed through symbolic sounds. These syllables also served to evolve a spirit or frighten it away. The idea was not clearly formulated into words but expressed directly in sound without the mediation of an intelligible sequence of words. Later on one finds that the logical thought and the musical motive pass little by little from the indefinite to the definite, in the course of a song 'as if the initial dream-state were gradually yielding to wakeful consciousness.'

For the primitive man, melody and sound had great significance; they had a magic power which was not abused but used judiciously. For instance, 'in the Solomon Islands, a young man sang and when one of them suddenly took a high note which others could not follow but a young girl took it up in that high register and continued it, it meant that the two people were in love'.

A melody is not a chance combination of notes but an organic and dynamic whole, 'a form which is more than the simple sum of the notes of which it consists'. The artificial placing together of single notes in succession may be a synthetic product but bereft of musical life. Even the aboriginal discards such a melody as 'powerless because it is not able to offer a *dwelling place* to a spirit'. A primitive \*\*melody may not have the sophistication of intricate harmony, or variation of subtle tonal textures; it is merely a continuous repetition of varied motives, regulated essentially by the tension between the beginning of the motive and the last note. All the notes in between 'are determined by conscious striving towards the last note'. But the significant point to note, is that the motive and the series of its repetitions *grow* according to definite patterns which can assume the most varied forms according to the particular culture or the ideas and feelings expressed.

### A mode of thinking

Thus music is a mode of thinking in tones and rhythms. Hearing of simple music stimulates different types of awareness. Thus music conveys some sense

(\*) Paper presented at the All India Seminar on Music organised by the Institute of Advanced Study, Simla in October 1976.

\*\* This word is used in the sense of simple, unsophisticated, pure melody,



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although the tones except in the physical sense, are incapable of definition, as the substance of the tones hardly forms the vehicle of thought. This is specially true of primitive music. We have to discover the fundamental principle by which a certain organisation of sounds makes sense.

## Language Analogy

Here the analogy of language would be useful. It is a mode of thinking in words. Words are symbols for things and acts, their qualities and their mutual relations. The association of symbols with objects and actions and other facts, forming new words and later on sentences, is in short the genesis and evolution of language. Just as in language the verbal syntax which is the fundamental convention of speech has its roots in human experience, so also in music, the syntax of notes is just as important and is based on human experience. It is as easy to make nonsense with words as with notes.

Eg: "Gopal and music to perfectly those sweet listens." Eg in music: *ga re ni ma ga pa re ma ni* etc. These two are meaningless but the first sentence when expressed thus makes a little more sense "Gopal listens to those perfectly and sweet music". Similarly the above musical phrase when expressed thus would make more sense:

*ga pa ma ni re ma ga re*

Like language, music is a conventional utterance, assuming in different periods, the forms to which it is constrained by its relation to other existing conventions of life. Therefore it has its own intrinsic laws, dictated by the nature of the musical

substance. But its growth is, strangely, in spite of these laws, not because of them. But here we are proceeding a little towards stylised music.

## Folk Music

Whereas Folk music is the unconscious expression in melody of the racial or ethnic feelings, character and interests of a people. It is music created without benefit of scientific training by the common people or peasantry which chronicles their lives, in terms of design, melody and rhythm and later on becomes part of their tradition. The Western civilization believes that the human race grew out of savage yells and grunts and the first steps in the history of musical development could be traced in its primitive fragments of time and rhythm. Therefore the natural music of a people depends on their temperament, culture and habits. For example "the music of a demonstrative people is rhythmic and lively; of a saturnine people gloomy; of a melancholy and poetic people—pathetic; of a matter of fact people simple, direct and unelaborated; of a lively people merry and light".

## The origin of Music

There are many other theories about the origin of music, like those of Charles Darwin, Rousseau, Herder, Spencer, Wallaschew and Buecher. It is not necessary to go into their respective theories and merits in this paper. But the theory of Carl Stumpf that music arose, like speech, from the need to give signals by sound, and speech indeed is protomorphic music may be somewhat over-simplifying the proximity of language and music but none-the-less it is possible to speculate the 'sound-language' as the common source of speech

- 1 The Evolution of the Arts of Music by C. H. H. Parry.
2. Primitive Music (1893, London).



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and music. Language is 'merely a sort of levelled down music'. Where the meaning of the syllable depends on the pitch on which it is uttered, the language naturally tends to be musical. The sound language gave birth to both speech and music, the former 'striving towards free rhythm' and the latter towards 'a more regulated one'.

Here I wish to express my difference of opinion with the Western scholars like Stumpf. I believe that the very expression 'free rhythm' used by Stumpf in respect of language seems a contradiction in terms because the very word rhythm implies regulation or uniform recurrence. To carry this logic forward, rhythm is implicit in all arts but not in language, unless it is specially spoken with a specific accent or feeling. Because there are two basic forms of rhythm—one is morphological and the other psychic; rhythm is common to all arts including architecture which Samuel Johnson called 'frozen music'. Where there is feeling, there is psychic rhythm. Rhythm is the expression of the regulation of a form of feeling, either psychic or structural. Rhythm is a kind of dance of the heart.

## Language & Music

Also I do not believe in the interconnection of language and music and the evolution of the latter from the former as Western scholars do. My belief is that all music of the world has evolved out of the interjectional and exclamatory expression of the feelings - be it man or animal. Language of words is valid only to man; about animals? They also have a language but it is the language of sounds, as when a dog is playing or is angry or is sad. The fundamental difference between the language of words and the language of sounds is that the former is *mediate* and the latter is an

*immediate* form of communication. The latter has an *im-mediate* appeal and is easily and instinctively appreciated. Even poetry is a *mediate* art. And I would go even further to state that the natural occurrence of storm and thunder is an interjectional expression of the clash of clouds. But the Western scholars denounce this as 'pathetic fallacy' as they believe that it is fallacious to impose feeling on nature.

But it is now a matter of common knowledge that even the so-called inanimate things like stones and metals have a dormant consciousness recognised and acknowledged by eminent scientists of the world. *Nācāitanyamvidyate* is an old Sanskrit saying, which corroborates this. Apart from Stumpf, the theories of others have been rejected as untenable or only partially tenable. The realistic imitation of natural sounds forms an important part of primitive music. Then followed totemistic music with its concept of anthropomorphism, representing animal, stone, plant, wind and musical instruments etc., reflecting almost the entire order of society.

## The Great Bond

The interesting phenomenon is the enormous importance given to sound as 'the mysterious bond uniting all things in the universe'. It was believed that if a man who represented the totem-god—say of a snake, tiger or frog, could imitate the cry of that particular animal to perfection, he would 'obliterate the boundary between the subject and object and identify himself with the totem' and in fact will become the totem. This is indeed very significant because it is this concept which assumed a different dimension in Indian classical music. The legends regarding the production of rain and the creation of fire through singing raga *Megh-Malhar* and raga *Deepak* or the materialization of the



Deity of *raga* by singing the *Dhyana mantra* of that *raga* and the *raga* with fervent devotion, are all part of the same phenomenon of the total merging of the subject-object into a state of creative void which is the field of all possibilities.

Having dwelt so far on the origin of music, I shall now take up Indian music and broadly trace its aesthetic and spiritual evolution.

### Spiritual Basis of our Music

It is indeed necessary to stress the solid spiritual base of our music. Our *Jāti-gāna* was considered as *gāndharva sangita* because it was believed that it not only pleased the *gāndharvas* or celestial beings but also the gods.<sup>1</sup> The *jātis* not only gave rise to material prosperity (*abhyudaya*) but unseen spiritual benefits, (*adṛṣṭa phala*). This music was in turn founded on *Sāma Vedic* music. And therefore it was not meant for the masses. But at the same time there was secular music which went by the name *Gāna*. This consisted of *Grāma rāgas*—six in all as mentioned in the earliest Sanskrit text *Nāradiā Sikṣā* (150 B.C.). Indian music for over two thousand years has been having two parallel streams of evolution, the sacred music consisting of *Vedic* and *Jāti sangita* and profane or secular music consisting of *Gāna* and *Grāma rāgas*, *Bhāṣās*, *Vibhāṣās*, and *Antarabhāṣās*. *Jāti-gāna* with its elaborate *Grāma-mūrchanā* system gradually faded out by 10th century A.D., whereas *Gāna*, i.e., *Grāma-rāgas* with their feminine counterparts *Bhāṣā* etc., flourished and grew into *Mārgī* and *Deśi sangita*. Later on *Mārgī sangita* was supplanted by *Deśi sangita*. In this connection, it is interesting to note the change in connotation of *Mārgiya sangita* in the course of about

eight centuries. In the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Bharata states that *Mārgiyā sangita* is spiritual music like *Vedic* music. He distinguishes it from *Gāndharva sangita*. Then *Gāndharva sangita* itself came to be referred to as *Mārgiya*. A few centuries later, in the time of Matanga, the secular music of *Grāma rāgas* came to be called *Mārgiya sangita*. After Matanga, the term *Mārgiya* began getting mixed up with *Deśi sangita*.

### Raga, Tala

By about the 13th century A.D., in the time of the magnificent work *Sangitaratnākara*, *Jātigāna* etc., had practically died out and had been replaced by *Grāmarāga* etc. But at this stage it is important to dwell on the two unique contributions of Indian music, namely, *Rāga* and *Tāla*. *Rāga* is both an evolute of the *Jāti* and the *grāmarāga*. It has incorporated in it the ten *lakṣaṇas* or characteristic of its matrix the *jāti*. But in the course of the centuries, it steadily began to shed its rigidities and became more vulnerable to free improvisation. *Rāga*, in its etymological sense, means a colouring, a sonic dyeing of the consciousness in various sonic colours of the notes. Although apparently rigid in structure, when mastered, a *rāga* is capable of infinite improvisation, e.g., Yaman, Bagesri, Malkauns, Bhairava, Bhairavi, etc. Here the *rāga* will stand comparison with our *Yoga*. Just as in *Yoga*, the rigours of intense discipline are calculated to realise total release from the thralldom of not only the flesh but from all attachment, in a similar way the restrictions in the structure of the *rāga* would vanish with the attainment of adequate mastery in all the aspects of the *rāga*-technical, aesthetic and emotional. In other words, to

achieve effortless expression it requires tremendous, sedulous and continuous effort. The discussion of the question of the quality of effort would lead us to the study of the Metaphysics of effort which again would take us to the border of mysticism. To understand Indian music fully, in its essence, it is necessary to have a synoptic vision of the physical, psychological, aesthetic and spiritual aspects. Therefore *rāga* could be best described as an *aesthetic gestalt* because it is something much more than the sum total of its external components. It has a distinct personality, *bhāva* and a *rasa*. It is considered as the language of emotions.

### Unique

No other music of the world has any musical form resembling the *rāga* of Indian music. It is both secular and spiritual depending on how one takes to it because the fundamental difference in approach of the Indian and the Western outlook on art, including music is that the former is centripetal and the latter is centrifugal. In Indian music, the study and practice of the *rāga* and also *tāla* is in fact, a voyage of discovery of the very source of all sound and rhythm which is *nāda* and *laya*. *Nāda* at the source is not the audible sound of music but the cosmic vibratory Energy through whose irradiation the entire universe has been created. And *laya* is the divine immanent rhythm which is inextricably integrated with *nāda*. Therefore the sentence, so often heard from great master musicians that one's musical notes should emanate from the *nābhi* or the inadequate English equivalent navel, has enormous significance which those great musicians themselves did not realise because the *nābhi* is the centre of *parāvāk* or the vibratory Energy and the primordial source of all sounds. The only way to cognise

this is through *prāṇā* which should not be mistaken for breath. *Prāṇā* is the source and cause of breath. It is the base on which all sounds, feelings and activities of man rest. Modern science has proved that there is a common energy which manifests itself in various ways in sound, colour, feelings and that they are all therefore interconvertible. That is why the colour blue is supposed to indicate *bhakti* (devotion); ochre detachment; yellow spiritual; green jealousy; red anger, etc. Many interesting experiments are being conducted in the USSR and Germany about the inter-relation between colour and sound which I had the opportunity of seeing when I visited those countries. Therefore the cognition of *prāṇā* and establishing oneself in it is no different from *Prāṇa-cintan* Yoga which is one aspect of Patanjali's *Rāja Yoga* and his *aṣṭhādḥā prakṛtti*. That is why music and all arts and learning was known by the term *vidyā* which meant that true learning would lead man to immortality.

### Tala

Similarly the origin of *tāla* was from *Chanda* (metre). The word *tāla* is derived from the Sanskrit root *tal* which means the palm of the hand. The extended connotation would be rhythm as denoted by the use of the hands. Some believe that *tāla* is an acrostic word combining the first syllables of the words *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* of *Śiva* and *Pārvatī* respectively.

I shall briefly deal with the concept and evolution of *tāla*. *Tāla* was the function to measure time of a musical rendering. Time was considered to be eternal by itself and therefore unlimited. Therefore the fundamental question was whether time could be measured and if so how. Time is differently conceived in the

1. Ab. Bha. NS. (G.O.S.) P. 43



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different schools of Indian philosophy. Time in itself is one but it appears to be many with reference to the changes or events that take place in it.<sup>1</sup> The concept of *tāla* is based on the understanding of time-space. Time itself is not measurable; what is measurable is the action or event that takes place in it, the limitation thereof being subsequently attributed to time. This time is transitory and relative it always has a point of reference or a standard of measurement with reference to which it becomes perceptible. This time is chronological and consists in the notion of sequence in which certain events are prior and others posterior. But the time that is eternal is yet the substratum of this partial time. Abhinavagupta calls it the *kāla-khanda*, i.e., a portion of time. He further states that it is the action of singing that is actually measured in terms of time. He elucidates Bharata's definition thus:—

“The *tāla* arises from the instrument spoken of as *ghana* by the application of *saśabda kriyā* such as *śamyā* and *niśabda kriyā* such as *āvāpa* which embodies action within a portion of time and is essentially a substance, is the means of measuring (literally limiting) the extent of the act of singing<sup>2</sup>.”

In other words *tāla* is conceived by him to be the means, fashioned out of the *saśabda* (sounding) and *niśabda* (silent) *kriyās* (acts) for measuring the extent of the act of singing, as it is extended in time. If extension be understood as the quality or property of space, then *tāla* is essen-

tially the means of determining and regulating the act of singing in the time—space. But Abhinavagupta has referred to only two aspects of *tāla*, namely, movement (*kriyā*) and divisive time-measurement (*paricchiṭṭi*). But there are two other aspects also which are equally important. They are (i) patterns of the time-division and (ii) their cyclic recurrence.

Again he says that time cannot be perceived without action<sup>3</sup>, rather it is time that is the cause of every limitation<sup>4</sup>. Time is, as already pointed out, the formal cause of all change, its material cause being the limited objects or particular actions. So action or *kriyā* is a means of determining the divisions of time in its transitory aspect and time on the other hand is the substratum in which the actions take place in its eternal aspect.

Śārngadeva extended this thesis of Abhinavagupta of *tāla* being the means of measuring the act of singing in time-space, by identifying *tāla* with *kāla* (time). He states “Providing through action (*kriyā*) measured by units such as *laghu* etc., the measurement of song (*gīta*) etc., time (*kāla*) is *tāla*<sup>5</sup>.”

To go into the subtle differences in the concept of Abhinavagupta and Śārngadeva is not germane to this paper. Having conceived *tāla* as time, qualified by the measured expanse of the act of singing and the necessity for definite patterns of time-divisions and their cyclic recurrence, we find that the patterns of action that determine the forms of *tāla* imply alteration of

1. Cf. *Tārakasāngraha*, p. 15.
2. see *Ab. Bha* on *N.S.*, (G.O.S.) 31.1, p. 151.
3. See *Ab. Bha.* on *N.S.* (G.O.S.) 31.1, p. 151.
4. *ibid.*
5. *S.R.* 5.3.



relative action and rest, the frequency of which produces rhythm (*laya*) and tempo. So the three factors—time, action and the rate of change (caused by relative action and pause) constitute *tāla*.

Between the period of Bharata (200 A.D.) and Śārngadeva (13th Cent. A.D.), there was tremendous development of *tāla*. In Bharata's time, there were only five *Mārga tālas*, namely *caccatpuṭa*, *cācapuṭa*, *ṣaṣṭitāpūtraka*, *udhgaṭṭa* and *sampakveṣṭaka*, but by the time, Śārngadeva appeared on the scene, there were as many as 120 *tālas*. These were known as *Deśi* because in his time *Deśi rāgas* constituted the popular classical music. There were eight ways of marking the *mārga tālas*, namely, *Āvāpa*, *Niṣkrama*, *Viksepa*, *Praveśa*, *Dhruva śāmya*, *Tāla* and *Sannipāta*.

The development of the *Deśi Tālas* was closely linked with the development of the *prabandhas*, many of whose names, the *tālas* bore. The *tālas* of present days also have a close bearing in structure with those of the *Deśi tālas* but Hindustani music drifted away a little after the advent of the *tabla* whereas Karnatak music still retains the old patterns. The introduction of the *tabla* was a landmark in the evolution of Hindustani music. That gave the singer, for the first time, full scope for

free improvisation and made possible real vilambit (slow) elaboration.

We have today the *Dhruvapada*, *Khyāl*, *Thumari*, *Tāppa*, *Bhajans*, *Ghazal*—all artistic expressions of man in different moods. These are the direct products of his creative genius. He has summarised his deepest experiences and embodied them in the above indelible forms showing other men who are not as fortunately endowed as he, that the experience of music cleanses the emotions, makes possible the contact with that source which is the essence of beauty and permanence.

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4. History of Musical Thought by Donald N. Ferguson.
5. *Nāṭyaśāstra* by Bharata, Gaikwad Oriental Series, Baroda.
6. *Sangitaratnākara* by Śārngadeva, Adyar edition, 1959.

—o—  
This is not an age that you can disparage. There is an extraordinary amount of talent—so much indeed that not all of it can be fully recognised—Neville Cardus.

## A Dialogue with Rama

By

Dr. S. RAMANATHAN

Addressing Rama in a song composed in his 80th year, Tyagaraja says "I have carried out your mandate with all my heart in a leisurely manner. Now is the time to call me back".

munu nīva ā nati iccinadi  
manasā raga ni dā na muga sulpinanu  
daya cūcutaku idi vēla dāsara the

References like this one where he speaks of having a dialogue with Rama abound in his kritis. Tyagaraja says that such communion with Rama occurred to him early in his life.

Cinna nāda cey paṭṭivi

"You took hold of my hand in my childhood".

In some of his kritis we find graphic reports of such musical experiences. In 'Giripai', (Sahana), Tyagaraja says that he had vision of Rama unmistakably on the hill :

Giripai nelakonnu Rāmuni

Kuri tappaka Kanti

In "Paluku Khanda Cakkara", Rama is said to have spoken to him eulogising the music and dance of the damsels dancing before Rama while in Court.

In the kriti, "Nati mata", Tyagaraja says that he was present in Rama's court and that Rama granted him a rare and unique privilege. This, he says, happened in his early life.

Nāti māta maracitivo O Rama !

"Have you forgotten the words you spoke to me when I was young, O Rama?"

"You said, why are you in a despondent mood? This privilege is yours!"

Tyagaraja was a master of suspense. Even after the Anupallavi, we do not know what it was :

"mātti māktiki nāpai mannana  
jēyucu

etiki yocana ī bhāgyamu nīdanu".

Now comes the caranam which reveals it like a blossoming flower :

"While you were witnessing a dance by young girls, I was looking at your feet with a melting heart. You then stopped Bharata who was wafting the whisk. With compassion you offered that privilege to Tyagaraja".

There are a few verses in the Uttara Kanda of Valmiki Ramayana which describe the dance and music performed by young maidens while Rama was holding court. These provided Tyagaraja with beautiful visions which he has graciously passed on to us in these two immortal compositions : "Paluku Kanda" and "Nāti māta"

"upā nrtyanta kākustham nitta gita  
vis aradāh".



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"Ramayā māso dharmātma Ramo-  
varah"—Valmiki Ramayana-Uttara-  
kanta).

"Maidens well versed in dance and  
music danced before Rama; and Rama  
the embodiment of righteousness,  
pleased them by his praise."

Many are such episodes in the Rama-  
yana which Tyagaraja has dexterously  
woven into his songs. These afford us an  
insight into his mystical experiences which  
prompted him to ask:

"Inta Kanna ānanda mēmi"?

"Is there a greater delight than  
this?"

## The Music Seminar—A Post-Script

by

SMT. SAKUNTHALA NARASIMHAN

Among the questions raised at the con-  
cluding session of the two-day Seminar on  
Music and Musicology organised by the  
Shanmukhananda Sabha in Bombay last  
February were two posers from veteran  
Wamanrao Deshpande. The average  
Indian listener, he observed, gets the  
impression, on listening to South Indian  
music, that

(1) the extra-slow tempo *ati vilambita  
kala*, as practised in Hindustani music, is  
not to be found in Carnatic music; and

(2) Carnatic music leans heavily on  
words—i.e., on *sahitya*-based music, so that  
it seems difficult for a northerner, with a  
language barrier, to appreciate the beauty  
of the music to its fullest.

Several delegates—representatives of both  
north and south—commented on these two  
points, refuting as well as underscoring  
their content. However, the question still  
remains:

How much validity is there in these two  
statements? Does the *ati vilambita kala  
pramana* have a place in the scheme and  
practice of Carnatic music? And is

Carnatic music dominated by lyrics  
(*sahitya*)? If so, then what is the place  
of absolute, word-free music in its  
format?

Answers to these, interestingly, depend  
on whether one is viewing the question  
from a theoretical or a practical point.

In theory, there is nothing preventing  
the use of the extra slow tempo in  
Carnatic music (or, for that matter, the  
extra fast!) There are no textual edicts  
forbidding the performance of Carnatic  
music in as slow a tempo as one wished  
(and one's competence allowed). In  
general, it is in the Pallavi item that the  
slowest speeds are tackled, so we can  
examine this question with pallavi as the  
example. Technically, this item can be  
sung in '4 kalai chowkam', or in 16 or  
even 32, the limit being set only by the  
performer's ingenuity and his or her  
mastery over rhythm.

Which brings us to the practical angle—  
although for the artiste gifted with an  
extraordinary sense of rhythm, keeping  
track of 16 counts per beat may not be  
beyond the limits of competence, in actual



performance it is rarely that anything slower than the 4-kalai *chowkam* is used.

In Hindustani music on the other hand, the *vilambit khayal* is frequently begun in a tempo much slower than that corresponding to the 4-kalai *chowkam*.

Why is this so?

At least two explanations spring to mind. One is that the nature of the gamakas used in Carnatic music is such that their amplitudes do not carry (they are 'short wave' shakes, if one may coin such a phrase) and therefore to attempt to perform this kind of music to an extra slow tempo would be to rob the music of its aesthetics. One has only to listen to snatches of Carnatic music played back at half-speed on the tape recorder, to see how continuity is impaired. In other words, the characteristics of the typically south Indian gamakas rule out the use of the extra-slow tempo in concerts.

The peculiarities of the gamakas that mark the Hindustani style make it possible on the other hand, for one to perform extremely slow speeds - the wide amplitude shakes and swings seem ideally suited for slow speed use. This is the reason why the observation about relative speeds still holds when one disregards *laya-baddha sangeeta* and confines oneself to *raga alapana* only. The northerner gets the impression, even while listening to an *alapana* in the south Indian style, that the music is 'faster' than the corresponding treatment in the Hindustani style. The 'brikas' and gamakas that are essential decorations for any musical phrase make it aesthetically impossible for a Carnatic *raga* delineation to be as slow as in the Hindustani style.

That is one aspect of the question. The other is that the terms 'vilambita' and '4-kalai *chowkam*' are relative terms and not absolute, specific time measures. How slow is 'slow'? Opinions will differ, not only between the north and the south, but among musicians of the same genre too; are we not familiar with the fact that certain 'schools' of tradition are known for singing the same *kriti* (or *khayal*) in a particularly slow tempo (or fast, as the case may be). Amir Khan, for instance, was noted for the choice of the *ati-vilambita kala*; other musicians of the Hindustani style (belonging to a different *gharana*) prefer a much faster 'vilambit' for the same *khayal*. In the same way, in Carnatic music too, if the GNB school had a reputation for 'speeding up' compositions, some of the older schools had a penchant for taking up anything in what the average listener would call 'ati vilambita' tempo.

One further reason might be found in the fact that in Hindustani music, *tala* is not maintained by the vocalist or instrumentalist, but by the *tabla* player. The need to keep track of slow counts is not a distraction to the main artiste, who is free to meander with the music and pick up the relevant point of the *tala* cycle once in a while. This would be certainly difficult if the singer also had to mark extra slow time while spinning out the music.

The second point, about Carnatic music being lyric-based - indeed, lyric-dominated is perhaps easier to answer. Yes, *sahitya* does have a far greater part to play in south Indian music than it has in Hindustani music. This is clear from the format of the archetypal concert patterns in the two styles. In today's arrangement, the *kriti* forms the mainstay of the concert in

Carnatic music - and *kritis* are *sahitya*-based compositions learnt and performed by rote. (Even when an instrumentalist performs, it is still the *kriti* that forms the bulk of the programme, and although the words cannot be articulated, the listeners get the feel of the phrasings and word-placings from the plucks or bowing of the instrument.)

In contrast, the mainstay of the concert in Hindustani music, the *khayal* form, has very little by way of *sahitya* (and once the first line is sung, it is often abandoned in favour of a single word or phrase repeated according to choice, for the rest of the item). In fact, *sahitya* counts for so little that one can (and several leading musicians do) get away with dropping the 'antara' or second half of the lyric, in its entirety!

So, as far as present day concert patterns are concerned, there does seem to be this difference in emphasis on the lyric aspect of music in the two systems.

Whether the language barrier acts as a damper on the enjoyment of the music as such, seems to be a debatable point. After all, not all south Indians who listen to and appreciate Carnatic music understand the meanings of the *sahitya* in the compositions sung. Yet that does not prevent them from reaching for and enjoying the aesthetic element in the melody - the *sahitya* is often just a vehicle for musical phraseology.

As in most generalisations, of course, here too, in making observations about Carnatic and Hindustani music, one can always point out exceptions to the rule. For instance, if one compares the two styles in terms of the *tarana* and *tillana* forms, one cannot say that the words have greater importance in one than in the other. A *bhajan*, again, has the same amount of *sahitya* as a corresponding devotional form in Carnatic music.

And what about a session of comparative music display in which an instrumentalist, a veena artiste perhaps, from the south, played a *raga alapana* and *tanam*, followed by an instrumentalist from the north performing *alap* and *jod* on the *sitar*? The question of *sahitya* would be completely side-stepped, but they would still be Carnatic and Hindustani music respectively, none-the-less. To say that Carnatic music has more of words than Hindustani music would not be, in this context, correct.

As far as common concert patterns in the north and south are concerned, therefore, one might say that there is, indeed, substance in the observations that Carnatic music does not employ the kind of *ati vilambita kala* that one finds in Hindustani music, and that the place of *sahitya* is more important in south Indian music than in Hindustani music.



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## Mridangam - Tabla - Pakhawaj

by

PANDIT SURESH TALWALKAR

### Pakhawaj

The *Pakhawaj* is also known as the "Mridang" in ancient literature, and in some parts of the country is still recognised as such. Pakhawaj, though a classic instrument, is mostly seen accompanying the "Dhrupad-Dhamaar" style of classical music and the devotional Bhajan and Keerthan forms, but is never used to accompany the Khyal or Thumri forms of vocal music.

*Structure :-* Basically, the pakhawaj is built just like the Mridangam though the skin used is comparatively thin, and there is a considerable distance between the stretch of the upper layer of the skin which covers a little more than the rim of the surface, and the circular central layer of the "Shaaee". Moreover, there is no gap between these two stretches across the mouth of the Pakhawaj. The layer of the wheat-flour paste applied to the left surface is comparatively thicker.

### Tabala

This is the most popular percussion instrument today and enjoys an enviable position in the field of classical, light-classical, devotional as well as the modern film-music.

*Structure :* Unlike the Mridangam or the Pakhawaj, the tabala is a set of twin instruments, the one on the left being the "Baayan", is made of an alloy of metal, while the Tabala is made up of some special type of wood. The skin used for

Some basic and vital information regarding the types of Indian percussion instruments and their place in the North Indian as well as South Indian traditional classical music is given in this Paper.

The existing percussion instruments are of varied shapes, timbres and abound in number, but the instruments bearing a "SHAAEE" (it means a circular, dried layer of a paste of some specifically chosen metal-oxide and glue, applied to the middle of one of the playing surfaces of the instrument) fall into a special category which is typically Indian, and have an ancient tradition behind them. The following thoughts, therefore, are restricted to this special category.

These instruments may be named as the  
1) Mridangam 2) Pakhawaj 3) Tabala.

### Mridangam

The *Mridangam* has been in use for ages and is as popular and important today as it was then.

*Structure :* The instrument bears the "shaace" on one of its surfaces and the central portion of the other playing surface is covered with a thin layer of a freshly made paste of flour. The leather skin stretching across the mouth is rather thick and the distance between the upper leather stretch and the "shaace" amounts to nil. Nevertheless, there is a small, nearly invisible gap between these two layers of skin, lending the instrument an internal resonance.



the "Baayan" is similar to the one used for the left surface of the pakhawaj, but instead of the paste of flour, (which was used for quite some time), there is the patch of "Shaaee" on its surface.

All the three instruments - the Tabala, the pakhawaj and the Mridangam - are used for a solo rendering of rhythmic complexities and enjoy a doubly respected position. The description of the comparative difference between the structure of these instruments has been here restricted to its relevance to the present subject under discussion.

### The Two Styles

The North and South Indian styles of Indian Music differ in their view point, and consequently in their treatment of Time (LAYA) which, of course, is the very foundation of any rhythmic activity. It is necessary, therefore, at this juncture, to point out the difference, these two viewpoints being :-

1. *Guru Laya*: Seems to treat TIME with a broader outlook. Here, the time-span between any two beats in a given time-cycle (called 'MATRA') is divided generally in a simple way, but any minute division of the matra is not taken into account.

2. *Laghu Laya*: On the other hand, treats a matra as made up of smaller and smaller units of basic time and gives rise to innumerable complexities.

### Comparative Potentialities

The Tabala and the Pakhawaj have a sustained resonance, due to the thin skin stretched across their surfaces and the considerable space kept between the "Shaaee" and the rim. The alloy used for the "Baayan" also plays an important

part in adding to the resonance, and makes it possible for the player to bring out a large variety of sound-syllables by placing and positioning his palm and fingers according to the many available points of contact, both on the rim and on the considerable space between the "Shaaee" and the rim. As a result, there is a variety of strokes that can be brought into use while playing these drums.

This gives rise to a rich and most expressive sonic language of rhythm ever found elsewhere. This language of rhythm therefore, boasts of a complete basic alphabetical structure, though ultimately it speaks in terms of rhythm and its aesthetics.

This resonant quality of the Tabla and the Pakhawaj encourages mainly the handling of the Guru Laya, which has become a salient feature of the Hindustani percussion style. In the case of the Mridangam, however, the thick skin used and the tight external stretch which leaves no space between the rim and the "Shaaee" as such restricts the resonance and the possible variety of strokes considerably, resulting in a comparatively limited vocabulary of staccatto, very jerky sounds.

### Subtle

Yet this absence (or near absence) of resonance has proved to be a blessing in disguise, for the minute intervals of time between two strokes lead the player into the most subtle types of deliberation on the complexities of "Laghu Laya". The interest is maintained here by keeping the flow of highly imaginative and complicated rhythm patterns unhampered, and creating such patterns on the spur of the moment, while playing. This is, decidedly, the speciality of the South Indian percussion instruments. It is because of

this special feature, the folk percussion instruments like the "Khanjira" and 'Ghatam', which do not have a rich language to their credit, are listed in the classical category and some times even steal the show while participating in a rhythmic orchestra - the "Taalavadya Kacheri".

### Variations in usage :

In the North, the tabala player may accompany classical singing just by keeping time, using the plain sonic phrase representing a chosen time-cycle (THE THEKA) over and over again, in a resonating and dignified way, and still make the whole recital most interesting and completely arresting. This requires special talent and is recognised as such. Vocalists who tend to indulge in rhythmic intricacies during the recital can be accompanied dexterously by the Tabla-player, who may likewise, engage in rhythmic complexities.

The Mridangam, however, is expected to follow each and every melodic pattern traced by the singer throughout the concert. The Pakhawaj player does much the same thing in the North, while accompanying the "Dhrupad-Dhamaar" style, which though, is fast disappearing.

This then, is a short resume of the distinguishing features of the construction, potential and usage of the most popular percussion instruments in the Northern and the Southern system of classical music.

[Paper presented at the Seminar on Music & Musicology held under the auspices of the Sabha in February 1981. Pt. Talwalkar gave also a practical demonstration of Tabala playing along with Vidwan Chandramouli who presented the Carnatic rhythmic patterns on mridangam.]

—Ed.

## Teaching Music—Then & Now

By

R. VENKATARAMAN

Should we retain and follow the Gurukula system for teaching, learning in Carnatic classical music? Does it suit our present social, economic and environmental conditions? Is it feasible and workable in the changed conditions of our life and living? Is there any prospect of its revival in the present pattern of society?

These are some of the questions which have arisen and usually figured in any assessment of the state of Classical Carnatic music today; and which have been answered by the musicians and musicologists,

rasikas and patrons, critics and lovers. I would therefore preface this article by recalling what two Sangeetha Kalanidhis, and two enlightened rasikas have opined on this subject.

### Experts' views

Dr. Balamuralikrishna who claims to have his training in music under this system, had observed in his Presidential address at the 52nd Annual Conference of the Music Academy, Madras in December 1978 : "The merits of the time-honoured Gurukula system can never be challenged, but since the times are changing, it is



difficult to meet the demands of the public and so music conservatories have a great responsibility to train the students of music in a proper way". And yet, he wanted all the performing artists to specialise at least for five years under a Guru.

Prof. K. S. Narayanaswamy, Veena Vidwan, and Principal of the Sri Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya, Bombay, in his Presidential address at the Music Academy in December 1979, had doubted the appropriateness and relevance of this praiseworthy system in the present time; and finally said it was unworkable.

"The Guru-sishya tradition is dead. Let us not waste tears on what cannot be revived", opined Shri S. Y. Krishnaswamy, I.C.S. (Retired), one of the few living authorities on Carnatic Music with great insight. At the same time, he desired better students of music to be picked up for intensive training by the leading artists.

Eminent musicologist and Veena Vidwan. (late) Prof. R. Rangaramanuja Ayyangar, in an article in the "HINDU" dated November 26, 1976, wrote "Gurukula and Karna Parampara traditions collapsed round about 1900. A handful of musicians crossed into the present century. They were not slow to see the writing on the wall".

### The Gurukula of old

Yet, the Gurukula pattern of training can be said to have lingered on till about the first quarter of this century. It was the Annamalai University, a residential University (of which I am also an alumnus) which in 1929 introduced this pattern of training in its Music College; and which in the initial stages, could reasonably claim

to have trained the younger aspirants in that system.

Subsequently, however, the old Gurusishya relationship of personal supervision and discipline, parental care and affection (which are all the hall-marks of the Gurukula system) in transmitting knowledge in music dwindled; and now, it is well-nigh impossible for the University in Annamalai-nagar to lay any claim that it is training the 'Sangeetha Bhushanams' in this system.

### Institutional Teaching

Down South, the Swati Tirunal Academy of Music which was established at Trivandrum in 1936 with the same objective of teaching and giving training in music partially under the Gurukula system cannot now claim to have been following it in essentials.

The Music Academy, Madras has been encouraging the Gurukula scheme, by attaching a student of music to eminent Vidwans, and meeting the cost of that training.

The Government of India, Department of Culture, has also been awarding scholarships to young artists of outstanding promise for advanced training in music and other fine arts under a Guru/Master. Though, under this liberal financial assistance scheme, young promising musicians are tagged on to the leading contemporary musicians, the true and intimate flavour of the traditional Gurusishya bhava was missing for various reasons; one of them and the most important was that the final choice and selection of the disciple rested, not with the Guru but with the Selection Board of the Government, an outside body.

### The old Mileau of learning

The system may have been a success in the past (say, till 60 or 70 years ago) when music served as an aid to a better understanding of religion; and when the Vagg-geyakaras, too, composed soul-stirring songs studded with some of the most elevated religious thought. The musicians of those times preferred to sing more for the love of it, than for any pecuniary benefit. Teaching, in general, and particularly music teaching, in those days was deemed a pleasure, a selfless noble service; and the teachers too never cared for materialistic returns, nor took cash remuneration from their students.

Further, music then was confined to a particular region limited to a few, and remained the preserve of a select community and locality. It was possible in those days for the young musicians to remain with the Guru, doing odd jobs, while learning the rudiments of music, as well as its niceties.

There were then Rajahs and Maharajahs, Zamindars and Dewans, Nobles and Nawabs to patronise the fine arts, and nurse the Sangeetha Vidwans who could thus devote their time and talents to the task of imparting musical knowledge to the chosen and deserving sishyas.

### Totally Changed Conditions

But what is the position today? Base commercialisation has robbed our classical Carnatic music of its divine content and spiritual appeal which have been relegated to the background, and replaced by cheap popularity and mass appeal.

Due to various social, economic, linguistic and financial factors, it becomes as difficult to spot a dedicated and sincere Guru, as to get a keen and devoted sishya. And there are today a larger number of artists - more musicians - trying to acquire knowledge and competency in music, vocal as well as instrumental. How many among our budding artists can afford the luxury of advanced training in music under a leading musician in a far-off place, away from their homes? Many parents and guardians, too, may not be willing and prepared to send their wards to study under a Guru, when facilities to have that training at a comparatively less cost are available.

The ennobling effect of the Gurukula pattern on the young artists can scarcely be denied. Alathur Venkatesa Iyer, taught his own son, Sivasubramania Iyer, besides Srinivasa Iyer from a different family, who both shone in the musical world as the Alathur Brothers. And my daughter, Vijayalakshmi stayed in Tiruchi for over five years for her advanced training in music under the late Alathur Srinivasa Iyer; and she can claim to have been trained intensively under the Gurukula system, with satisfactory, results.

Living as we do in a period of mass communication and mass entertainment media and devices like the Radio and television, film and press, the Gurukula system in music teaching and learning has gone, perhaps never to return.



# Yakshagana - Folk Theatre of Karnataka

by

K. L. RAMAN\*

The value and significance of folk arts in our national life cannot be too strongly emphasised inasmuch as, from times immemorial, they have been the mainstay of the cultural life of the masses. India abounds in a variety of folk arts and each State has a distinguished folk art of its own. The classical art forms are highly developed cultural expressions. They are elitist in the sense that their intricacies require a quantum of basic knowledge and refined understanding in order to appreciate them fully. Such refined knowledge belongs only to a few.

Folk art forms, on the other hand, while not completely unrelated to the classical forms, are popular manifestations of the same cultural core, specifically intended for the people. Moreover, in a pre-dominantly agricultural country like ours, the great majority of people live in villages. And since ours is a land of diverse religions, races and languages, each State has evolved a different and distinct type of folk tradition and culture suited to its religion, language and customs.

## Famous

Among the folk theatres of India, 'Yakshagana' has a special significance. Yakshagana is the famous folk theatre of Karnataka. In its concept of total theatre with dance, music, dialogue and decor all harmoniously blended, Yakshagana can claim to be equal to any of the better known dance forms of India.

Dr. Kota Shivarama Karanth's researches and tireless efforts to locate old palm leaf manuscripts dating back to the 17th century and constituting authority on Yakshagana have thrown abundant light on the content and performance of Yakshagana plays. He has done a lot to rescue it from oblivion.

## Dr. Karanth

This distinguished author from Karnataka is a versatile genius. He is a novelist, play-wright, essayist, lexicographer, encyclopaedist and above all, a great educational thinker. He is the recipient of the prestigious awards of both the Sahitya Akademy and Central Sangeet Natak Akademi, in addition to several awards conferred by the local cultural organisations in Karnataka. Today, Yakshagana has come to stay on the Indian National stage, thanks largely to Dr. Karanth, the seventy-seven year old living exponent of this fine folk theatre of Karnataka. What poet Mahakavi Vallathol was for Kathakali, Dr. K. S. Karanth is for Yakshagana.

It is a matter of pride and prestige that this traditional and popular folk theatre of Karnataka has gained enormous popularity and fame not only in India but also in other foreign countries due to the dedicated services rendered by Dr. K. S. Karanth and his band of disciples.

## Nomenclature

In earlier times, Yakshagana used to be called 'Bhagavatara Ata' 'Dasavatara Ata' or simply 'Bayalata'. 'Ata' in Kanada denotes a play. Yakshagana has its counterparts in Tamilnadu in 'Therukoothu', the folk theatre of Tamilnadu, 'Bhagavatha Mela' the dance Drama of Melattur, 'Veedhi Natakamu', the ancient folk theatre of Andhra Pradesh. However, in all these folk theatre forms, there are many points of similarity in their style, production and presentation.

The nomenclature of Yakshagana came from a special style of Music which accompanies these plays. In an article published in MARG (Vol. IX, No. 2 Dr. K. S.) Karanth said :

"It is only in regard to the dance drama form prevailing in some parts of Karnataka, that the term 'Yakshagana' has relevance. The term signifies a style of music which at one time was prevalent all over the Deccan Plateau. So, long plays called 'Yakshagana Prasangas' were written and staged in this particular style of music in those days. It is no longer the case now.

It is a very ancient style, to which many references are found in Kannada literature of the tenth and twelfth centuries. Yakshagana embraced in earlier times a form of music played before the royal personages. At a later date, owing to the advent of more evolved systems of music like Karnatak and Hindustani music, Yakshagana received a setback. Indeed, it would have completely vanished but for the fact that opera-like plays began to be written in this style and their enormous stage success has con-

tributed to its survival right to this day."

In Kannada literature, namely in Chandraprabha Purana (A.D 1105), the word 'Yekka' (meaning solo or one) is used in connection with a musician singing before the king. Sarangadeva in his Treatise on Music, has made the above fact very clear. It was a style of music during his time. Later on, Govinda Dikshitar also had confirmed it clearly as a style of music. It is now estimated that there are more than three hundred Yakshagana plays written by a number of Kannada writers from the beginning of the sixteenth century. The tradition of staging such plays has continued over the past few centuries, evolving its own peculiar stage techniques.

## Themes—Opera

An essential feature of these plays is that the play is conceived as a fantasy dealing with heroes, gods and demons: stories and anecdotes from our legends and myths constitute the main themes of these plays. Usually, themes from our immortal and world famous epics, the Ramayanam and the Mahābhāratham, are incorporated in these plays since they are moralistic in outlook and didactic (e.g.) that virtue alone ultimately succeeds and that evil will be destroyed; that love and devotion to God and right conduct in life are essential for salvation. Most of our traditional dramas in any language or State lean heavily on legendary lore. The special distinction of Yakshagana (like the Bhagavatha Mela Dance Dramas of Melattur) consists in the presentation of the story through the medium of music, dance and literature.

The most attractive aspect and the very backbone of Yakshagana is its operatic

\* Asst. Secretary, Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram



nature. Songs and verses blended with music and dance are employed for the exposition of its themes. The language is simple and direct and can be easily understood by lay audiences.

#### Palm Scripts

In Kannada literature, numerous palm scripts of early Yakshagana plays have been preserved. Dr. Karanth in the course of his exhaustive research for authentic documentation was indeed fortunate enough to spot one such manuscript which is the story of Virata Parva from Mahabharatha written by one Vishnu Ajapura (Brahara) in South Kanara. The scripts of other three authors dating as far back as A.D. 1618, are also available to us. These authors, namely, Devadasa and Subramanya of Nagire have between themselves contributed about twenty plays.

#### Ragas & Talas

Even early writers like Devadasa and Vishnu have adopted nearly about 150 ragas and different talas in their compositions. Dr. Karanth feels that a critical study and perusal of these raga names discloses that there are many ragas that sound unfamiliar to both Karnatak and Hindustanic systems of music—to quote a few, Hoovu Mechali, Panchgathi, Mecchu, Kore etc. Some are common to Karnatak and Hindustani like Vrindavani, Vasantha bhairavi, Yaman kalyani and many common to it and Karnataka like Begada, Todi, Sankarabaranam, Kkamboji, Athana, Nilambari etc. A book called 'Yaksholasa' is said to contain details of Yakshagana ragas and talas. Dr. Karanth says "what now behoves us is to make a study of the existing ragas and preserve them".

We could easily guess as to how the concept of Yakshagana dance-drama came

into being. The names 'Bhagavatharata' or 'Dashavathara Ata' provide us this clue. These were plays enacted as the pranks or leela of Lord Krishna. Bhagavathapurana should have inspired them. The producer of this type of play got the name 'Bhagavatha' from this tradition of Bhagavatha Cult. The Bhagavatha tradition itself owed its origin to Sri Madhavacharya of Udipi.

Though in early days, themes selected from the Bhagavatha only were enacted, stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharatha got their due at a later date. The Bhagavatha Cult made its entry to other regions like Andhra and Kalinga during the time of Madhvacharya.

#### Performing Details

Full-fledged Yakshagana Prasangas (Compositions) are performed by traditional troupes of professionals attached to their respective temples under whose banner they are enacted. They were and still are all-night shows similar to the Therukoothu plays of Tamil Nadu. They were and are still performed in the open air places except a few which are now-a-days presented in the cities in pucca auditoriums with modern stage and technical facilities. Admission to these programmes is even now free. In the early times when transport facilities were very rare and were not within the reach of the common man these artistes used to move from one village to another by foot with their stage properties. The well-to-do person of the village used to bear the entire cost of a performance.

The Bhagavathar or conductor of the play has to sing all these songs (besides many narrative verses) to the accompaniment of cymbals and drums. Each

Yakshagana play, like the Bhagavatha Mela play or Therukoothu play, commences with a prayer to Lord Ganapathi and other deities. This prayer is performed so that the day's show may go off without any hitch or obstacle.

As in the Bhagavatha Mela dance drama and Therukoothu play, every chief character in a Yakshagana play appears behind a laced red cloth spread like a curtain vertically before him and held on the two sides by two persons. Yakshagana plays, though they appear to be classical in music, dance and abhinaya, yet have their own folkish features. The characters spell out their diction in dignified prose after each song. The dialogue is delivered *extempore* and often improvised on the spur of the moment after the Bhagavathar or conductor has sung one stanza after another during the running of the play.

#### First-Rate Operas

In the words of Dr. Karanth 'These Yakshagana prasangas or compositions are written in very simple language, but a few of them are first-rate operas. Their literary worth may be secondary to that of music. This literary content is elaborated by way of dialogues between the various characters that enter the stage. Their prose is extempore. Half the richness of this dance drama comes from its songs. When the emotional content of a play is rich, it lends very well to music and dance and attains depth. The songs of these plays have been composed with an eye for dance. Their patterns display various talas like adi, matya, jampa, rupaka etc and are admirable for varieties of footwork.

Kathakali with its strong accent on rhythm and the language of gesture allows no dialogue spoken by actors. In Yakshagana, the story unfolds itself through the

dialogues delivered by the actors. The male characters display valour and vigour, whereas the female characters provide joy and amusement with the aid of the *lasya* element in the dance.

#### Theatre

There was no stage nor a prepared auditorium. The shows used to be put up in street junctions or in open places and all the Yakshagana performances used to take place at night like Therukoothu and Bhagavatha Mela plays, presumably because rural folk are so busy during the day in the fields etc. Oil torches were employed to light the area. As the dim and yellowish flames flickered, the dazzling costumes donned by the characters imparted to the atmosphere a strong element of fantasy.

#### Make-up

Make-up and costumes are quaint and interesting. Facial makeup is done with the indigenous coloured powders. The area of the temples near the eyes is covered with white and outlined with streaks of red. A white tilak is painted on the forehead and a blackline is drawn in the middle. The female characters do not have much facial makeup but they have red tilak on their foreheads.

The main colours used for the demon or evil characters are red, green and black. The face is multi-coloured. Rice paste is used to outline the contour and after many such layers, the face acquires a solid three dimensional effect.

#### Costumes

The costumes for all the characters are effective. The ornaments are elaborate and dazzling. Special types of head gear are used, corresponding to the nature of the characters portrayed in the play. These costumes can stand comparison with



the best in the world. Now-a-days utter degeneration has come into costume and make-up. The traditional costumes and ornaments have been discarded due to the advent of modern theatre and ubiquitous films.

According to Dr. Karanth "In the case of Yakshagana, there will be no use wailing over its loss after we lose the present generation of hereditary artistes whose livelihood is at stake. To them it means livelihood as well as an art experience, which if lost, may not be possible to regain. Well respected, well preserved and well cultivated traditions alone can bring such art forms to life."

#### State level patronage

The Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram and the Institute for Development Education presented 'Panchavali', a Yakshagana play, by the Yakshagana Kendra troupe of Udupi at the Women's Christian College Auditorium in November 1980. The hall was filled to overflowing. It was a rare sight to see the elite of the

city at the above hall to witness such a folk play. It was even more surprising to observe that such an audience was really appreciating and enjoying each and every sequence of the play.

The above troupe is rated to be the best professional Yakshagana troupe in Karnataka. The actors are adepts in this art and all of them exhibited amazing skills of acting and dancing. The glittering costumes donned by all the characters of the play, coupled with fine stage craft exhibited by them, were of the highest professional standard. The music was also rich and traditional.

Thiru C. Aranganayakam, Minister of Education of Tamil Nadu who presided at the performance, observed that the importance and necessity of staging festivals highlighting the folk art performances of neighbouring states cannot be over-rated, as folk artistes of one state will have the opportunity of comparing their art forms with the other's which will facilitate cross-fertilisation of ideas for presenting the folk arts to a wider public.

## Karnatic Music Across the Seas

By

DR. R. KRISHNASWAMI\*

NEW YORK

Vidwans of Karnataka music, returning home after a successful (often guaranteed and under-written) coast-to-coast concert tour of the United States, tend to carry back with them, memories of large audiences listening with rapt attention to their concerts. They tend to disseminate this image, and their opinion based on it, that really cultured and appreciative audiences, are now only to be seen abroad. The vidwans cannot be blamed for this. Indeed, their observations and the inferences drawn from them are real. However, many of the artistes are unaware of the effort organisers on this side of the Atlantic have to put in to make the tour

\* Dr. Krishnaswami is the President of the Sri Sadguru Sangitha Samajam of Purasawalkam, Madras-7, which has published the Kirtanas of Sri Thyagaraja (Sahitya and meaning in Tamil by Sri T. S. Parthasarathy).

break even financially. Although it is not easy nor is it wise to generalise on the various factors governing these "successful" tours, nevertheless, some analysis of the ingredients of this success are worth considering, even though some of these points of view may look commonplace or even cynical.

#### Plus Points

The plus points first. The Americans are a catholic lot and unlike other White nations, are not only tolerant, but are ready to appreciate and savour alien cuisines, music, philosophies and even religions. The number of Americans taking a keen interest in classical Indian music, both Hindusthani and Karnataka, has been steadily increasing for some time. There are scholars researching into various aspects and components of our systems, the composers' lives and their contributions, comparative studies of various systems, the evolution of music as an art etc etc. William Johnson of New York is currently doing his thesis on the contribution of Sri Tyagaraja to world religion and literature; Amy Catlin of Brown University, Rhode Island, has just completed her work on Changes in Karnataka music. Capable and qualified teachers of music, each of them competent performing artistes in their own right like Harry Powers, John Higgins and even those who have taken to the more unconventional, if not the more difficult instruments such as Nagaswaram like Bill Skelton of Colgate University, are all people you are unlikely to find in any other Western country. Indeed, the Ethno-music Departments of some of the American Universities are unique in some ways and all of them have tape libraries of considerable value, volume and variety. All this has tended to create in this part of the world, a small but discerning listening public.

While what I have said about the American component of the audiences is true, their number is not large enough to provide the bulk of the audience crowd. This naturally must be made up of Indians living here. Quite a few of these Indian listeners are knowledgeable and attend all concerts, music being the only factor influencing their attendance.

#### Audience psychology

Having said that, I shall proceed to examine the composition of the "vast crowds" and the psychology of "rapt attention" of these audiences. Boorstein said that man today believes in the vivid image, rather than in the pale reality. John Wayne is preferred to the real cowboy and even the Grand Canyon when you get there, looks like a pale reproduction of the original Kodachrome. This is a nation of immigrants and every section of the population is keen on preserving the image of its ethnic identity. The Jew is more Jewish here than in Israel, the Peruvian Indian is more Indian here than in Lima and so on. The South Indian is no exception to this desire for ethnic identity and ethnocentricity. He is more temple and music oriented here than back home. The image of the visiting artiste promoted within the immigrants from his area, language or communal group, is an important factor. An Andhra artiste attracts a large Andhra crowd, a Tamil artiste a large Tamil crowd and so on. Lack of knowledge of either the artiste or his art, is no bar to enjoying a concert, where the group loyalty is the prime motivating factor for a person to enjoy a music concert. I shall cite two examples to support this view.

#### Group Loyalty

Some forty odd years ago, the annual Conference and concerts of the Music



Academy, Madras, were being held at the Sundareswarar Hall, Mylapore. An artiste from Kerala, a leading vidwan, who was scheduled to sing one evening, could not make it for some reason. The alternate programme had been advertised well in time—an artiste of equal eminence from Tamil Nadu was to sing. While the concert was going on, a gentleman from Kerala, who had failed to notice the change in the programme and who had come to listen to the Kerala artiste, learnt by accident that the vidwan on the platform was not his hero. The man, who until then was greatly appreciating the music with appropriate gestures and noises, suddenly became withdrawn and afterwards left complaining about the poor quality of the music of the Tamil Vidwan. This man did not identify the artiste, could not identify the music and yet could appreciate it while his impression lasted that the man singing was indeed his hero.

#### A Pitfall

The second example I am going to mention, is possibly something which all of us have gone through and emerged a little worse for it. This is only in respect of instrumental music, be it veena, violin, flute or nagaswaram. Listening to a recorded programme with the name of the artiste unrevealed we make guesses. If we thought the artiste was one we considered excellent, but proved to be a dark horse, we grudgingly concede that the artiste has some virtue. If on the other hand you thought it is some one inferior but proved to be the top person you didn't think him to be, you express surprise at some minor flaws you happened to notice. While this will not apply to extreme black or white cases, no one can deny that in the vast majority of gray cases, even the most experienced critic has his pitfalls.

Ethnic identity and image therefore determine the crowds and not so much the love of music of the artiste in particular.

#### Courtesy

To understand the background for the apparent spell-bound nature of the audiences and the discipline with which they conduct themselves here, it must be borne in mind that western civilisation and its respect for silence and decorum demand it.

I shall end this note with an intimate experience of this western politeness I had forty years ago. The agent of the Imperial Bank of India, Ooty was transferred. A farewell party was got up by the staff. The party included tea and a veena recital by a staff member. The agent, a Scotsman, was conducted to his front seat after the tea, to listen to the veena. The concert could not start as the artiste suddenly found that the veena he had so carefully tuned before leaving home, had one peg loose now. Much peg-twisting and string plucking followed. A few minutes of this and the Scotsman rose, approached the dais and told the artiste "That was delightful. I enjoyed it very much". He then took leave and left the spot. He was not only an attentive listener but even gave verbal acknowledgement of his appreciation.

#### Basis of Criticism

Talking of images and subjectivity in appreciation of art, brings me to something I have been oversensitive to, for a long time—our music critics and their reviews. Of course there are exceptions, a small minority. Saying that a man is five foot six is stating a fact, saying that some one is tall is stating an opinion. A six footer may feel that five six is on the shorter side and a four footer may feel that height too high. Without exception, reviews

tend to give opinions without stating the basis of those opinions. No correspondent, to my knowledge, ever says that an artiste violated and strayed from the grammar, spelling or syntax or that the artiste by conforming to the rules brought forth the excellent and inherent intricacies of a raga, a sahitya or tala; the handling of vivadi swaras, moorchanas and gramas, the sensible or otherwise, use of modal shifts or sruti bedas; incorrect or intelligent use of poorvanga and utharanga swaras in an uncommon raga etc. etc. Possibly they do not do this since, even if the correspondents were competent to write on all these, the readers may not like it, as it might go well over their heads. Hence expressions like "Scintillating Sankarabharanam", "Varali rendered with a verve" or "Todi was tiring"—all personal opinions for which no basis is given. One correspondent I knew even throve on his criticism of the artiste rather than the art, a feature quite popular with readers. Alliterative phrases and covert innuendoes rob these reviews of and pretensions to musical scholarship. As I said at the beginning, there are exceptions to this.

Cricket was originally played on the village green for half-a-day and all in the village participated and enjoyed it. Today, it is big business and little of sport is left

in it or in any other so-called sporting events. Sport has become a modern substitute for war. Much the same fate has overtaken music which today, under the label secular, has strayed far too much from the original purpose of spreading Bhakthi leading to the "Sulabhamuga Kada Theranu Soochana" offered by Sri Tyagaraja Swami. Listen to an artiste singing devotional songs, deeply involved emotionally in it and see how you yourself experience the elevating and ennobling effect it has. I fervently hope that, without too much stress on the commercial and so-called popular factors interfering with the performance, artistes give some importance to living their music, while they are offering it. As mentioning names may be invidious, I refrain from referring to any one by name, but there are even to day artistes who will take you to those heights. Sangita without Bhakthi is a corpse bejewelled.

We should discourage the tendency to separate religious or devotional music from the commercialised secular music. I am not one of those prophets of doom, who believe Karnatak music is fading. I do not think that even in the Periclean age of its glory, it had so many practitioners and so many well informed connoisseurs. May the Sathguru bless us all to reap the rich harvest of our music and its noble traditions

—o—

"A few can touch the magic string  
And noisy Fame is proud to win them—  
Alas for those that never sing,  
But die with all their music in them"

—Oliver Wendell Holmes



## Cultural Scene in Karnataka

By

T. B. NARASIMHACHAR

During one of his visits to Bangalore, the Editor, 'Shanmukha', remarked that he got a feeling that Bangalore was scoring a march over Madras in the field of Cultural activities particularly patronage to music, though most of the popular musicians live in Madras. Every quarter I have occasion to report about some music festival or other in Bangalore. It is now the turn of Mysore which once was the seat of all musical activities under the patronage of its enlightened rulers. Now that Democracy has taken over the patronage of cultural activities, the venue is Bangalore, the new Capital for the past 30 years.

### Music conference at Mysore

The Sangitakalabhivardhini Sabha, Mysore was started by the doyen, late Mysore Vasudevacharya. After a good start it was in doldrums for some time. Thanks to the efforts and enthusiasm of its present office-bearers it has revived with regular programmes and so far has held two music conferences and festivals.

The second Mysore Vasudevacharya Memorial music conference and festival was conducted for five days from the 22nd of July, at the Krishnamurthipuram Rama Mandiram hall. It was a unique experience when the head of the Sringeri Mutt inaugurated it before a violin recital. During the conference there were academic sessions in the mornings and concerts - junior and senior-in the evenings-the latter entirely by artistes from this state.

The morning sessions were coordinated by Dr. R. Satyanarayana, the eminent musicologist, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Experts Committee. He spoke about the life and achievements of Vasudevacharya. Prof R. Visweswaran pointed out the problems in the field of music education. Dr. R. N. Sreelatha spoke about the structural beauties in musical compositions with particular reference to krithis and Javalis. Sri G. Narasimhayya referred to the scholarship of late Devottama Jois—a great scholar-contemporary of Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar-and pointed out that it is a little known but true fact that it was he who gave the text for most of the Kannada compositions of the Bhagavathar. Vidwan Cheluvayaswami elaborated on the compositional genius of Tyagaraja. Smt. T. Padmasini of Madras analysed the different ragas used by Tyagaraja. Smt Padma Murthi spoke about the subject of her thesis for doctorate and the experiments conducted in that direction - Psychotherapy through music.

### Demonstrations

R. N. Tyagarajan and R. N. Tharanathan (Rudrapatnam Brothers) sang some rare compositions of the late Maharaja-Jayachamaraja Wodeyar. Pallavi S. Chandrappa gave a demonstration of Avadhana pallavi in Raga Komalangi-Chaturagati misrajati Ata Talam in one hand and Tisragati-Khanda jati-Matya tala in the other.

Dr. S. Ramanathan spoke about the rare janya ragas of the Mayamalavagowla mela. He quoted various textual authorities and said that if there are a number of janya ragas in any mela one may assume the latter to be an ancient raga. Bangalore K. Venkataram traced the use of 'ghatam' as a musical instrument in concerts and pointed out its limitations-its use in Kashmir folk music-reference in Padmaraja purana as 'Vara kumbha Vadya' and M. A. Krishnamurthi demonstrated its playing technique. Pandit Seshadri Gawai of Bangalore spoke about the varying fortunes of Harmonium as an accompaniment in Hindusthani music. He played some songs to stress its suitability.

Dr.K. Venkatalakshamma, the eminent Bharathanatyam artiste of Mysore, gave a very illuminative lecture demonstration on 'Rasabhinaya in the Mysore school of Bharathanatyam'. In reply to a question whether there was traditional sanction for incorporating the Pancharatna krithis of Tyagaraja in dance programmes, she shrewdly pointed out that just because something was not tried before it does not become non-traditional. Much depends upon the acceptance of a new venture by the Rasikas and the ingenuity of the dancer in exploiting a new composition to suit the medium.

### Symposia

The part played by contemporary composers was the subject of a symposium in which many composer-musicians recounted their experience. Prof. R. N. Doreswami, S. N. Mariappa, Prof. V. V. Ramaratnam, C. Rangaiah were some of them. T. B. Narasimhachar referred to the talks he had with the late Ariyakudi, G.N.B., Maharajapuram, etc., and pointed out that there were countless musical gems already

handed down to us by our great composers, which are yet to be exploited by our practising musicians; that almost all possible compositional techniques have been handled by them and wondered whether the contemporary composers could introduce any novel technique such as composing 'Vadya prabhandhas' instead of only geya prabhandas as each musical instrument has its own individuality due to its structure, playing technique and the resultant aural experience.

### Raga lakshana

Many musicians and scholars including Dr. S. Ramanathan of Madras participated in discussion on the lakshana of ragas 'Kalgada' and 'Devakriya'. Ramanathan referred to the different way in which different composers have used these two ragas; explained their Aroha and Avaroha; Tyagaraja in 'Darinitelisukonti-' Suddha Saveri/Dikshitar Sri Gurugha Sri-Vatukanatha - Madhuramba; On the concluding day it was decided that 'Devakriya' was Kharaharapria janya according to the Tyagaraja school and equivalent to Suddha Saveri according to the Dikshitar school.

On the concluding day of the conference Vidwan R. Chandrasekariah, eldest of the Mysore Brothers - who presided over the conference was conferred the title 'Gana Ratnakara' by the Head of the Sri Vyasaraja Mutt. The conference also honoured vidwans C. Rangiah, M. Chelluvarayaswami, R. N. Doreswami, Kanchana Venkatasubrahmanyam, A. K. Venkatanarayana and Smt. R. Lakshamma, for their proficiency in their respective fields.

Cassetts containing some songs from the compositions of vidushi Lalitha Navile selected from her book 'Tillana Guchcha' (tillanas on the life of Purandardasa in



Kannada) and a violin recital by Kanchana Subburatnam were released during the conference.

### Ganesha festival

Though not on a large scale or for long period, several organisations, big and small celebrated Ganesha festival with music concerts. The more affluent ones were able to book leading musicians. Of course Maharajapuram Santanam, Bombay Sisters, Emani Sankara Sastri, N. Ramani, Balamuralikrishna and Lalgudi were some of the artistes who figured in more than one place, in Bangalore, Mysore, Tumkur, Shimoga, etc., indicating the trend of public taste and popularity. The 51st birthday of Balamuralikrishna was celebrated in Bangalore on an impressive scale under the auspices of Murali Revali's Bangalore group.

### Dance ballet, etc.

In the expansive Chowdiah Memorial hall, Sachin Shanker and his troupe gave a variety Ballet dance programme. It was visual and aural opulence provided by colourful costumes of the dozen dancers—male and female to the background of taped music by eminent musicians like Ravi Shanker and Salil Chowdary. Samjukta Panigrahi, the eminent Odissi dancer gave a delightful programme at the Ravindra Kalakshetra. Her undoubted artistic attainments and dedication to her chosen art was very much to the force in her programme, with accent on Lasya.

### Panegyrics to Krishna

On the eve of the Sri Krishna Jayanthi festival Mrs. Sugandha Raman and her disciples rendered 18 songs in different languages composed by 13 saint composers, at the Institute of World Culture. It was an all-ladies ensemble and maintained the

atmosphere of devotional rendering without indulging in musical exhibitionism. The vocal rendering by Mrs. Raman and her disciple Shanti Srikant was mellifluous and evocative. 18 ragas were used. The programme opened with a song by Mahakavi Oothukadu Venkattasubba Iyer and concluded with a memorable sloka from Bhagavatha which is a summation of the personality of Lord Krishna as described by Rukmini.

### Bastion of music

At the Malleswaram Sangita Sabha Dr. Semmangudi again proved that he continues to be the bastion of the best traditions of Carnatic music. T. Rukmini on the violin and T. K. Murthi on the mridangam ably assisted him. This concert was held in the wake of his receiving the prestigious Kalidassa award.

### Mali

The elusive Mali, though living in Bangalore for the past one year, chose some surprise venues for giving short recitals more to please some personal requests than to fulfill any professional engagement. He is scheduled to leave India by the middle of October this year. He had defied many tempting offers to the utter chagrin of his countless fans. That perhaps is the way of Genius.

### Trivandrum R. S. Mani

Semmangudi's concert was preceded by a programme by Trivandrum R. S. Mani, a senior disciple of the maestro and succeeded by one by T. M. Tyagarajan, the Sangita Kalanidhi designate, at the same venue. Mani was accompanied by M. Chandrasekhar on violin and M. S. Sekhar on the mridangam, who did their best to keep up interest in the concert but the vocalist was somewhat off colour.

## News & Notes

The late Musiri Subramanya Iyer's wide circle of friends and admirers included great administrators, distinguished members of the Fourth Estate, senior musicians and struggling young musicians. His transcendent force of character and "audacious self-esteem" (Samuel Smiles) earned for him the spontaneous homage of all. To win his esteem was not easy; to lose it was impossible. He measured up to Aristotle's description of the "true gentleman", who is "apt to admire, for nothing is great to him.....and he will know how to be exalted".

### The man & musician

"Musiri" brought a civilising grace and power to any position of trust and authority. The College of Carnatic Music, Madras, still bears the stamp of his wise statesmanship and direction. As the Principal of an institution staffed with a galaxy of great talent (Flute Vidwan Swaminatha Pillai, Vidushi Smt. T. Brinda, Veena Vidwan Sivanandam and others), Musiri exemplified the principle that, though talent makes a man respectable, it is tact that makes him respected; that talent may be weight but tact is momentum. And above all, he never joined the foot-and-mouth brigade of musicians who talk loosely and later repent it! And yet, Musiri's capacity for true, dignified friendship was almost a legend.

He was "Iyerwal" to some of the tallest figures of our times - Sri T. T. Krishnamachari, Messrs. G. V. Narasimhan, S.Y. Krishnaswamy, N. Subramanyan, G. Venkateswaran, all of the I.C.S.—the

term is eloquent of respect and affection. When the great painter Titian's brush dropped from his hand, Charles V, who was in the studio, picked it up and handed it to Titian with the remark "You deserve to be served by an Emperor". In like manner, at Musiri's Shashtiabdapurthy celebration, distinguished members of the Steel Frame took part in the lunch service, as a token of their respect for a man of commanding stature and a musician of unsurpassed culture. Implied in this gesture was their depth of musical sympathy too.

Sri C.V. Narasimhan, an ardent music lover with the aura of United Nations on him, was a sincere and steadfast disciple of Musiri. His stock of Tyagaraja and other kritis learned directly from his guru will surpass the repertory of many a practising musician. Between Musiri and Shri CVN subsisted a bond of understanding and mutual esteem that remained firm as long as Musiri lived.

### Musiri Portrait Unveiled

The Perambur Sangeetha Sabha and its veteran Secretary, Sri Sethuraman, could not have hit upon a more appropriate and distinguished personality than Sri CVN to unveil the portrait of Musiri at the Sabha last September. A large gathering of rasikas and musicians, young and old, was present. Sri Narasimhan's intensely cultured and perceptive mind came through in his naturally nostalgic and picturesque survey of the many decades of his tutelage under the maestro. Warm emotion coloured his moving assessment of Musiri



as a man of great parts, with great reserves of mind and heart to back his personality. Just as Coleridge's reading of Shakespeare was different from a student's, CVN's analysis of Musiri glowed with insight. Sri N. Subramanyam, I.C.S. (Retd.) gave expression to his abiding reverence for a lovable personality, while frankly disclaiming pretensions to assessing Musiri's musical stature. Sri N.R. Bhuvaram, veteran art critic, spoke warmly about Musiri's great stature as an exponent of the Vilambit Kala and a fine classical musician and his helpful attitude towards young musicians. Prof. T. N. Krishnan related how much he owed his early successes in the field to Musiri. And the ageing chela, N. G. Seetharaman, was on the verge of tears when he recalled his association with his guru 40 years back. The tributes added up to a truthful, highly moving assessment of Musiri as man and musician. Smt. Mani Krishnaswami's concert that followed was a respectful offering from one of Musiri's foremost and loyal disciples.

We congratulate the organisers, especially the Secretary, veteran Sri Sethuraman, on the idea of unveiling a portrait for the great departed leader, instead of starting a "Musiri" Memorial, and succumbing to the occupational disease of musicians these days.

#### "Sangeetha Chudamani"

It has been well said that "a thoroughly popular lecture ought to have nothing in it which 500 people cannot all take in a flash, just as it is uttered..... it ought to be something which all can understand, about something which interests everybody". When maestro Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman speaks on a public occasion, one is reminded of this quote! And when the

venue is Krishna Gana Sabha, T'Nagar, Madras, almost a home of lost causes, and the occasion is the conferment of the title of "Sangeetha Chudamani" in September last on Violin Vidwan M. Chandrasekharan, now a top violinist in his own right, you may be sure that Lalgudi will hit the bull's eye as very few musicians can. His compact speech on the occasion was a true example of thought about facts taking precedence over facts as such. It was a generous yet incisive assessment of Chandru's *metier* and mastery of the violin. Y. G. Doraiswami's rhetorical summing-up had its lighter side too, as when he recalled the occasion when Vasishtha conceded Brahmarishi status to Vishwamitra. All in all, a very pleasant function gone through with the efficiency and decorum one has learnt to expect from that unobtrusive master of ceremonies, Sri Yegnaraman.

#### The Fifty-fifty Club

The Fifty-fifty Club of Madras was launched in 1965, with the then unusual idea of providing "chamber music" to a small and knowledgeable audience which will extend the maximum rapport to the musician, senior or junior. The Club is "shy of publicity and neither sells tickets nor seeks press comment"—mottos unworkable for the common run of Sabhas. But it has certainly encouraged the flowering of rising talent during these 16 years, while the musical palate of its members has been well kept up by servings from masters like Semmangudi and others. The Club has only promoters and workers, no top, middle and lower order hierarchy, and is fully democratic in character.

The Club recently celebrated its 200th performance by inviting two fine maestros to give concerts, Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa

Iyer and Veena Vidwan S. Balachander - and both the veterans served up vintage music. Sri S. Y. Krishnaswami after dinner threw us into an exalted mental state by reminiscing sweetly of the days of yore when Tiger's manodharma was an expanding universe and Veena Dhanammal distilled essences of ragas - contrasts of a vast vista and of a singularly well cultivated perfumed garden of scented flowers. The celebration owed its colourful character to the self-effacing efforts of Sri Emberrumanar Chetty, Sri T. S. Nagarajan and a handful of members.

#### Musical Geeta Govindam

"The mind celebrates a little triumph every time it formulates a thought" observed a great philosopher. Smt. D. Pattammal must have felt likewise when she followed up her Tamil adaptation of Geeta Govindam reviewed in this Journal earlier, by composing and tuning it as a Musical Opera. Smt. Lalitha Seshadri, Smt. Sumathi Narayanan and Smt. Subashri Mani were the main elements of the orchestral ensemble. One is happy that Sabhas like "Saraswathi" and others featured this Opera which was a vehicle of much moving and chaste music evocative of "the stream with Heaven beneath its liquid floor". "Opera" is probably not quite an accurate description of this musical offering since there is no acting or drama involved.

#### Guru Kuppiyah Pillai

Bharatha Vidwan Guru Kuppiyah Pillai's death at the ripe age of 94 at Bombay recently is another reminder that the Periclean Age of great Nattuvanars has finally ended. At a very early age, Vidwan Kuppiyah Pillai was initiated into the intricacies of Bharatha Natyam by his illustrious father, Sri Panchapakesa Nattuvanar. He began his career as a Guru when he

was scarcely out of his teens and has since rendered several decades of service to the art of Bharata Natayam. In recognition of his great ability as an exponent of this art form, he was appointed to conduct the dance ritual service of Madhyarjuna temple at Thiruvudaimarudur, a great pilgrim centre of Tamil Nadu. Guru Kuppiyah himself has worked out a treatise depicting a total of 143 talas in a lotus-carved drawing - "Kamalachakram" (Lotus Wheel)-on its circular fringe are shown the 35 talas much in vogue today, the remaining 108 talas strewn inside like buds.

As a token of appreciation of his many achievements, the Madras State Sangeet Natak Academy conferred on him the coveted title of "the outstanding Bharata Natya Vidwan" in 1965. Recently, Guru Kuppiyah Pillai was bestowed the highest honour for any Nattuvanar, when he was conferred the Fellowship of the Sangeet Natak Akademy, Delhi.

Among the most notable of his accomplishments is the Sri Rajarajeswari Bharatha Natya Kala Mandir which, under his principalship and the work of his son-in-law, Sri Govindaraja Pillai, and his sons, Sri Mahalingam Pillai and Sri Kalyanasundaram, has trained a large number of brilliant Bharatha Natyam dancers.

#### South Indian Music & Dance in Paris

Elsewhere in this issue we print a brief report on the recent visit of the team of representatives of South Indian Classical Music and Dance to Paris to participate in the Autumn Art Festival, September 1981. The veteran Shri Y. G. Doraiswami was mainly responsible for the visit of our troupe (including the choice of the musicians, danseuses etc) and they have returned with large Kudos to themselves and South Indian Art.



Talking to Dr. N. Ramani, the eminent flutist, on the visit was an intellectual pleasure, when he analysed the Parisian's obvious preference for our Kritis, pallavis and other compact packages of South Indian music and remarked on the puzzling nature of the relatively less satisfactory response to our raga alapanas. Evidently, the notes of the raga scales, their gamakas and the seemingly repetitive nature of raga singing were a bit too strenuous for the Parisian mind—of course, such generalisations can never be too strongly asserted, but there they are! Brian Brocklehurst wrote: "Music's ambiguity is one of the secrets of its power, for we are able to draw from it according to our intellectual and emotional needs" And Cambarieu defined music as "feeling in sounds". Perhaps, the large Parisian crowds that heard Carnatic music and enjoyed it could really find the key to the grace and power of Carnatic music, while at home here, we sometimes bemoan the waning of interest in it. Paris, at least, is prepared to be 'high brow'!

### The Christmas Season

The Art Festival season of the South will soon be upon us and the various institutions are gearing up their efforts to give us all the "concentrated embodiment of the whole gamut" of music, dance, discussion and seminars. Sri T. M. Thiagarajan has

been elected unopposed to the prestigious Presidentship of the Madras Music Academy's fiftyfifth annual Conference—an event which does honour to both the giver and the given. Shri TMT has an excellent blend of scholarship and performance. The greatest exponent of Bharatha Natya, Dr. T. Balasaraswathi will preside over the December Conference of the Indian Fine Arts Society, Madras, while the selection of the Tamil Isai Sangam Viz., the savant Dr. S. Ramanathan, will command universal acceptance. More of all these in our next issue. The Bangalore Gayana Samaja has honoured itself by choosing veteran musician Sri R.K. Srikantan to preside over their 13th Music Conference. Rasikas and scholars are in for a spate of speeches and discussions that will, one hopes, remove the cobwebs of artistic doubt and throw beams of light on the cultural scene. Our congratulations in advance to all the above virtuosi.

### Smt. Sudharani Ragupathy at the UNO

"Shanmukha" offers its cordial felicitations to Mrs. Sudharani Ragupathy for being invited by the United Nations Organisation to give a Dance recital on Human Rights Day on 10th December 1981 at the U.N. Headquarters. Smt. Sudharani will also give a number of other recitals in U.S. and Canada.

KSM

## வேணுகானம் ஸ்ரீ சரப சாஸ்திரிகள்

BY

Sri R. YEGNARAMAN, B.A., B.L.

கோபியர்கள் கானத்திற்கு துணை வாத்தியமாக குழல் ஊதியது கண்ணன் திரு விளையாடல். ஆனால் கர்நாடக சங்கீதத்தில் குழலை மேடைக்கு ஏற்றிய தனிப்பெருமை 1872-ல் பிறந்து 1904-ல் மறைந்த, 32 வருடங்களே வாழ்ந்த, ஸ்ரீ சரப சாஸ்திரியாரையே சாரும்.

இவரது குழலைப்பற்றி திரு. வி. க. தன் வாழ்க்கை குறிப்புகளில் கூறுவதாவது: "பிள்ளைமையில் சரப சாஸ்திரியாரின் குழலோசையை கேட்கும் பேற்றை எனது காது பெற்றது". கண்ணன் குழலையும், ஆனாயர் குழலையும் காவியங்கள் வாயிலாக என் செவி மடுக்கிறது. அவ்விருவரும் சரப சாஸ்திரியாகப் போற்றி முழக்கிய குழலமுதை என் செவி பருகிற்று. சாஸ்திரியார் குழல் அமுதம் "மனத்தமுதம்" என்கிறார். சாஸ்திரியார் பிறந்தது, திருவையாற்றில் ஸத்குரு தியாக ராஜரது அடுத்த வீட்டில்!! சாஸ்திரியார் தந்தை, சாஸ்திரிகளையும், அவரது தம்பி, பின்னால் டீச்சர்ஸ் காலேஜ் பிரின்ஸிபாலாக பதவி வகித்த ஸ்ரீ சிவகுமார சாஸ்திரிகளையும் விட்டு, இளமையிலேயே காலமாகிவிட்டார். சிறு வயதில் ஒரு உறவினர் திருமணத்திற்கு சென்ற சாஸ்திரியாருக்கு கண்வலி கண்டது. அசிரத்தை காரணமாக பார்வை பறி போயிற்று. சாஸ்திரியாருக்கு வைக்கப்பட்ட பெயர் ராமச்சந்திரன். பாம்புகளை மாந்தரீக சாஸ்திரத்தில் கட்டுப்படுத்துவதில் வல்லவரான உறவினர் ஒருவரால் சூட்டப்பட்ட பெயரே "சரபன்" என்பது. கண்களை பறி கொடுத்து, தாயின் அன்பில் தனது மற்ற அவயவங்களை கூர்மையாக்கிக் கொண்டு வளர்ந்தார் சாஸ்திரியார்.

### தியாகராஜரின் தொடர்பு

சாஸ்திரியாரின் தாய் மாமன் ஒருவர் திருவையாறு கோயிலில் உத்தியோகஸ்தர். குப்புஸ்வாமி என்ற மற்றொரு மாமா ஸ்ரீ தியாகராஜ ஸ்வாமிகளுடன் பழகிய மதிப்பு பெற்றவர். ஐயர்வாள் கீர்த்தனங்களை இரு வராகப் பாடினால்தான் ஸ்வாமிகள் ரசிப்பாராம். ஆனால் தனிமையாகப் பாட உரிமையும் பெருமையும் பெற்று, "ஒண்டிக்குப்பன்" என்று ஐயர்வாளின் பெருமைக்கு பாத்திரமானார் குப்புஸ்வாமி. அவர் தான் தன் மருமகனுக்கு சங்கீதம் கற்பிக்க ஏற்பாடு செய்தவர். சாஸ்திரியார் புல்லாங்குழல் பாடங்களை கோவிந்த நாயனக்காரர் என்பவரிடம் கற்றார். அக்குருவின் ஆசிகள் சாஸ்திரிகளின் இசைக் கண்களை திறந்துவிட்டது.

### இல்லரம்

பத்து வயதிற்குள் சாஸ்திரியாரின் பேரும், புகழும், செல்வாக்கும் செழித்தோங்கின. நாளடைவில் சாஸ்திரிகள் "அம்மு" எனும் பெண்ணை மணந்தார். அவர்களுக்கு ஒரே மகன் பிறந்து இளமையிலேயே காலமாகிவிட்டான். சாஸ்திரியாரின் உருவப் படம் நம்மிடம் கிடையாது. அவரது இசையின் நிழல்கூட அவர் 1904 லேயே காலமாகிவிட்டதால் பலர் கேட்டிருக்க முடியாது. சாஸ்திரி மனைவி மட்டும் 1960-ம் வருடம் வரை வாழ்ந்து குடந்தை சோலையப்ப முதலி அக்கிர ஹாரத்தில் சாஸ்திரியாரின் ராம பஜனை மடத்தையும் அவர் பூஜித்த படங்களையும் முக்கியமாக இராமபிரான் படத்தையும் காண்பித்து வந்தார். சாஸ்திரியார்



கையாண்ட குழல் அவரது சிஷ்யர் ஸ்ரீ பல்லடம் சஞ்சீவிரால் அவரது சிஷ்ய பரம் பரமீடம் சேர்ந்துவிட்டது.

#### அமரர் இசை

சாஸ்திரியார் பால்யத்தில் காலமாகிய போதிலும், சங்கீத உலகில் அமரராகவே இன்னும் வாழ்ந்து வருகிறார்கள். அவரைப் பற்றியும், அவர் வாசிப்பைப் பற்றியும், இன்னும் அவர் வாசிப்பைக் கேட்டவர்கள், பக்கவாத்தியம் வாசிக்க பாக்கியம் பெற்றவர்கள் வாயிலாக அறிய முடிகிறது.

ஸர். டி. முத்துஸ்வாமி ஐயர் வீட்டில் நடந்த சாஸ்திரிகள் வேணுகானத்தை மருங்காபுரி கோபாலகிருஷ்ண ஐயர் இன்னும் மறக்கவில்லை. அந்த கச்சேரியைக் கேட்க திருமருகால் நடேச நாயனக்காரரும் அமர்ந்திருந்தாராம். இது சாஸ்திரியாருக்கு தெரிய வந்தபோது அவருடைய கச்சேரியும் சிறிது நடக்க வேணும் என்று சாஸ்திரியார் மன்றாடினாராம். நடேச நாயனக்காரரும் இணங்கி சாஸ்திரியார் விரிவாக கச்சேரியில் வாசித்த “கேதாரகௌ”யை வாசித்தாராம். இதைக்கேட்ட சாஸ்திரியார் “இன்று நான் சிதம்பரம் போய் நடராஜ மூர்த்தியை தரிசிக்க எண்ணியிருந்தேன். கண்ணிழுந்த என் மனக் கண் முன் நடராஜ மூர்த்தியை நடேச நாயனக்காரர் கொண்டு வந்து நிறுத்தி விட்டார்” என்றாராம். என்னே! ஒருவரது வாசிப்பில் மற்றவருக்கு விருப்பு வெறுப்பின்றி இருந்தமோகம்!!

#### பெரிய “ஸெட்”

சாஸ்திரியாருக்கு பக்க வாத்தியம் வாசித்த வித்வான்கள் மஹா வித்வான்கள் பிடி (திருக்கோடிக்காவல்) கிருஷ்ணய்யர், மலைக்கோட்டை கோவிந்தசாமி பிள்ளை; மிருதங்கம் நாராயணஸ்வாமியப்பா; கும்ப கோணம் அழகர் நம்பி பிள்ளை முதலியோர். ஒவொருவரும் ஸுகபாவத்தின் சிகரம் எனலாம்.

#### பைரவி சரபர்

பைரவி ராகத்தின் உயிர் நாடியாக சாஸ்திரியாரை, வீணை தனம்மாள் புகழ்ந்து

அவரது பைரவி, தானம், “கொலுவையுன்னாடே” நினைத்து உருகுவார்களாம்! ஒரு சமயம் மிருதங்கம் நாராயணஸ்வாமியப்பா வீட்டில் வெள்ளிக்கிழமை பஜனையில் சாஸ்திரியார் வாசிப்பைக் கேட்டு எல்லோரும் மயங்கி இருந்தார்களாம். “கொலுவையுன்னாடே” வாசிக்க வேண்டுமென்று கோரிக் கை வந்தது. “யார் கேட்கரு” என்று சீறினாராம் சாஸ்திரியார். “யார் கேட்பா, தனம்மாளைத் தவிர” என்று கிருஷ்ண பாகவதர் வினயமாக தெரிவிக்க, அவரும் வாசிக்க, “இன்னைக்கு கல்லும் கரஞ்சுபோச்சு” என்று கிருஷ்ண பாகவதர் கூற, சபையில் ஒரே ஆரவாரம். குதூகலம், கரகோஷம் ஏற்பட்டதாம். தேவகானத்தில் கூட குற்றம் குறை கூறுபவர் என்று சொல்லப்படுவரான சாரந்தா நாயுடு எனும் மகாவித்வான் சாஸ்திரியாரின் அன்றைய பைரவியைக் கேட்டு தலை அசைத்து விட்டாராம்.

சாஸ்திரியாரை எந்த வகையிலும் சோதனை செய்தல் முடியாத காரியமாம். எந்த ராகமானாலும், தாளமானாலும் கீர்த்தனையானாலும் ஒருமுறை கேட்டால் கிரஹித்து விடுவாராம்; பல்லவிகளும், கோர்வைகளும் அவருக்கு சரளம். சுகபாவத்தை வாசிப்பில் பின்பற்றினாலும், வாய்ப்பு கிடைத்தால் லய வின்யாஸத்திலும் சளைப்பதில்லையாம். பிடி, மிருதங்கமும் வாசிப்பாராம்.

#### லயப் பரும்மம்

ஒரு சமயம் புதுக்கோட்டை மாமுண்டியா பிள்ளையை சந்தித்தபோது, ஒரு நிரடான பல்லவியின் அமைப்பில் நெருக்கடி ஏற்பட்டது. ஒரு முறை செவி சாய்த்து பல்லவியில் தவறாக விடப்பட்ட இரண்டொரு தொடர்களை சேர்த்து குழலில் ஊதினாராம். மாமுண்டியா பிள்ளை ஆனந்தித்து “ஐயா, தாங்கள் லயப்பிரம்மன், லய சிம்ஹம் என்று பூஜித்தாராம். சாஸ்திரியாரும் பிள்ளைவாள் கஞ்சீரா வாசிக்கும் பொழுது அவரை சிவ பிரானது அம்சமாகக் கொண்டு பாடுவாராம்.

தச்சுர் சிங்கராசாரியார் கரகரப்பிரியாவில் “கோரி ஸேவிம்பராரே” எனும் கோலூர் பஞ்ச ரத்தினத்தில் ஒன்றை பாடம் செய்து பாடக் கேட்ட சாஸ்திரியார் மீண்டும் அத்தெலுங்கு கீர்த்தனையை பாடக்கேட்டு, ஸங்கதி வரிசைகள், கமகங்கள் எடுப்பு களுடன் வாசிக்க, சிங்கராசாரியார் ஆச்சரியப்பட்டு “இந்த கீர்த்தனை உங்களுக்கு முன்பே பாடமாக இருக்கவேண்டும்” என்று கூறி வியந்தாராம்.

#### உமையாபுரம் சகோதரர்கள்

தியாகராஜ ஸ்வாமிகள் சிஷ்யர்களான கிருஷ்ண பாகவதரும், சுந்தரபாகவதரும் சாஸ்திரியாரின் ஆப்த நண்பர்கள். ஒரு சமயம் சாஸ்திரியார் ஒரு கச்சேரிக்கு போகும்போது குறுக்கிட்டு ஒரு புதிய கீர்த்தனையை பாடினார்களாம். அதை கிரகித்து அன்றைய கச்சேரியில் அரங்கேற்றி விட்டாராம் சாஸ்திரியார்.

#### ஸாதகம் செய்வதில்லை

சாஸ்திரியாருக்கு ஞாபக சக்தி, மனோதிடம் மிக அதிகமாம். இளமையில் உழைத்ததைத் தவிர பின்னால் சாதகமே வீட்டில் செய்ததில்லையாம். இதை அறியாத ஒரு வட இந்திய ரஸிகர், இவரது வேணுகானத்தை கேட்க வேண்டும் என்று தினமும் திண்ணையில் காத்திருந்தாராம். காத்திருந்து என்ன பயன்? கடைசியில் யாரோ தினமும் திண்ணையில் காத்திருக்கும் செய்தி சாஸ்திரியார் காதிற்கு எட்டி “அடபாவமே, என்னை கேட்கப்படாதோ. நான் தினமும் வீட்டில் சாதகம் செய்வதில்லையே” என்று கூறி, தான் வாசித்து, ரஸிகரை திருப்தி செய்து அனுப்பினாராம். சாஸ்திரியார் ஹரிகதையும் செய்வாராம். ஒரு வீட்டு கல்யாணத்தில் குழலுக்குப் பதில் ஒரு ஜதை ஜாலரும், சிப்ளாக் கட்டையுடன் காட்சி கொடுத்து, வத்ஸலாகலியாணத்தை நடத்தினாராம்.

ஒரு சமயம் கீர்த்தனாச்சார்ய ஸ்ரீ. ஆர் சீனிவாஸாச்சாரியார் கதைக்கு, மிருதங்கக்

காரர் இல்லாது தவித்த குறையை சாஸ்திரியார் “நான் வாசிக்கிறேன்” என்று கூறி வாசித்தாராம். இடையில் மிருதங்கக்காரர் தோன்ற அவரிடம் மிருதங்கத்தை ஒப்படைத்துவிட்டு, பாகவதர் ஜால்ராவை வாங்கிக் கொண்டு பின் பாடகராகி கானமழை பொழிந்தாராம்.

குலமங்கலம் வைத்தியனாத பாகவதருக்கு 63 நாயன்மார்கள் சிவ கதைகளுக்கு நிருபணம் தயாரித்துக் கொடுத்தவர் சாஸ்திரிகளாவார்கள். இவரிடம் பாடம் செய்து கொண்டுதான் வைத்தியனாத பாகவதர் சென்னையில் ஞாயிறு தோறும் வந்து கதைகள் நடத்து வாராம்.

கல்லிடைக்குறிச்சி வேதாந்த பாகவதருடன் சாஸ்திரியார் ஒத்துழைத்து, அஷ்டபதிகளின் வர்ண மெட்டை சங்கீத உலகத்திற்கு அர்ப்பணம் செய்த ஸேவை பாராட்டுக் குரியதாகும்.

#### ராம மடம்

இவ்விதம் சங்கீத உலகிற்கும் சேவை செய்த மகான் என்று கொண்டாடப்படும் ஸ்ரீ சரப சாஸ்திரிகள் உபாஸித்து வந்த ஸ்ரீராமனுடைய மடம் புனருத்தாரணம் செய்து காக்கப்படவேண்டியது சங்கீத வித்வான்கள், சங்கீத ரஸிகர்கள், ஆஸ்திகர்களது, கடமையாகும்.

இந்த கட்டுரையை எழுதும் பொழுது கும்பகோணம் சோலையப்ப முதலி அக்ரஹாரத்தில் இருக்கும் வேணுகானம் ஸ்ரீசரப சாஸ்திரிகள் ‘ராம’ மடத்தின் புனருத்தாரண நிதிக்கென்று ஸ்ரீ டி. விச்வநாதன் வேணுகானம், ஸ்ரீ லால்குடி ஜெயராமன் பிடி, பாலக்காடு மணி அய்யர், ஸ்ரீ ராஜாமணி இரு மிருதங்களுடன் 25-6-66 ல் ஸ்ரீ கிருஷ்ண கான சபையில் நடந்த கச்சேரி ஞாபகம் வருகிறது.



## சித்திரவதையும் வற்றல் குழம்பும்

திருவையாற்றில் தியாகப்பிரம்மத்துடன் ஐந்தாறு பேர்கள் அமர்ந்திருந்தனர். ராமர் பூஜையில், வீற்றிருந்தார். இதயத்தில் இறைவனை நினைப்பதைப் போன்று தியாகப் பிரம்மம் தம்புராவின் தந்திகளைத் தடவிக் கொண்டிருந்தார்.

ஒரு பக்தர் வினவுகிறார், தியாகராஜர், பதில் தருகிறார். உங்களுக்கு பூலோகத்தில் பிடிக்கவே பிடிக்காதது எது? இது கேள்வியாக அவரிடம் கேட்கப்பட்டது. நாத உபாஸனை செய்கின்ற பக்தனுக்கு அபஸ்வரம் ஒன்றே பிடிக்காதது. நான் வித்வானல்ல ராமபக்தர் என்றார் தியாகராஜர்.

சங்கீத வித்வான்களுக்கு அபஸ்வரம் பிடிக்கும், என்று சொல்லுகிறீர்கள்? என்றார் கேள்வி கேட்ட அன்பர்.

ஸ்ரீராமனைப்பிடித்த எனக்கு பூலோகம் பிடிக்காது என்று சொல்வதற்கும் இல்லை. பிறவி பிடிக்காது என்று எண்ணுவதற்கும் வழி இல்லை. பிறந்தபின், பிறவிப் பயனாக ராமனை அடைந்து விட்டேன். அதன் பின் பிடிக்காதது எது? என்று சொல்வது தான் எனக்குப் பிடிக்கவே பிடிக்காது.

இருந்தாலும், தாங்கள் கேட்ட கேள்விக் காக பதில் சொல்லுகிறேன். எனக்குப் பிடிக்காதது இரண்டு உண்டு. அது தான் சித்திரவதையும், வற்றல் குழம்பும் என்றார், தியாகப் பிரம்மம். எல்லோரும் ஆச்சரியத் துடன், அவர் சொல்வதைக் கேட்டு மெய்-மறந்தனர்.

தியாகப் பிரம்மம், பக்தியில் தம்புராவை வைத்துக் கொண்டு முதல் பத்து நிமிடத்திற் குப் பாடவே இல்லை. பேசினார், பிதற்றினார்.

“பக்கத்து வீட்டு, சீதா உனக்குக் கல்யாணமாகி பத்து நாள் தான் ஆகிறது.

பத்து நாட்களும், கணவனுடன் சீதா என்று கோபிநாத் உன்னுடன் தானே இருந்தான்.

கோபிநாதன் என்னுடன் தான் இருந்தான், என்று சீதா சொல்லுவது உங்களுக்கெல்லாம் நிறைவாகத் தெரியவில்லையா? கல்யாணமான சீதாவுக்குத் தான் கோபிநாதன், [கோபிநாதன்] எப்படி இருந்தான் என்பது தெரியும்? பத்து நாளும் தன்னுடன் எப்படி, எப்படி இருந்தான் என்பதும் தெரியும்?

கல்யாணமானவர்களுக்கெல்லாம், இந்த விஷயம் ரஸமாகவே தெரியும், என்றார் கேள்வி கேட்ட அன்பர்.

தியாகப்பிரம்மம் பேசவில்லை. ரீதி கௌ ராகத்தில் ஆதி தாளத்தில் ... “த்வைதமு சுகமா? ..., அத்வைதமு சுகமா?... என்ற கீர்த்தனையைப் பாடினார். தாழ்வாரத்தில் அமர்ந்திருந்த பக்தர்கள் மெய்மறந்தனர்.

புரியாதவர்களுக்கு புரியவைக்கவேண்டும் என்பதே கடவுள். புரிந்தாலும், சர்ச்சையில் ஈடுபட்டுக் கொண்டே இருப்பவர்களுக்கு புரியாததே கடவுள். புரிந்தது த்வைதமு சுகமா? ... அத்வைதமு சுகமா? ... என்ற சித்தாந்த சர்ச்சையே.

சித்திரவதையும், வற்றல் குழம்பும், ராமபக்தனை, எனக்குப் புரியவே இல்லை. ஒரு வளை உங்களுக்குப் பிடிக்கவில்லை, என்றால் அவனைச் சித்திரமாக படத்திலே எழுதி, அந்தப் படத்தை வதை செய்யுங்கள். துன்புறுத்துங்கள். அது தான் சித்திரவதை. பூலோகத்தில், இந்த சித்திரவதை ஒன்று தான், எனக்குப் பிடிக்கவே பிடிக்காதது.

சீதாவின் கணவன் கோபிநாதன். இன்னமும் பத்து நாட்களுக்குள், திரும்பி

வந்து விடப்போகிறான். இருந்தாலும் அவன், அவன் இருந்ததையும், அவன் இல்லாமல் இருப்பதையும், கூட இருந்த பத்து நாட்களிலும் சேர்ந்து இருந்த ஒவ்வொரு நிமிஷத்தையும் சேராமல் சேர்ந்தே இருந்த ஒவ்வொரு நிமிஷத்தையும் சுகம் என்று சொல்லாமல், சுகமாகவே இருந்தான்.

இதை என்ன என்று சொல்வதை விட, கல்யாணம் ஆகி விட்டது என்பதே நல்லது.

தேன் தனியாக இருக்கிறது, தேனடையில்; நாக்கு தனியாக வாயிலே இருக்கிறது என்பதை விட தேன் சுவைக்கிறது என்பதே கடவுள். சீதாவுக்குக் கல்யாணமாகி விட்டது என்பதே அனுபவம்.

... “தேன் தனி, நாக்கு தனி, என்பது கடவுள் தனி, நாமும் தனி... என்பது த்வைத சித்தாந்தம் சுகமா என்று கேள்வி கேட்பது.

“சீதா உன் கணவன், இனி மேல், திரும்பியே வரமாட்டான் என்று அவளிடம் சொல்லவே முடியவில்லை. சொன்னால், உயிருடன் உள்ள கோபிநாதை படத்திலே எழுதி அந்தப் படத்தையே சித்திரவதை செய்வதைப் போன்று, இருக்கிறது, என்று அவள் கதறுவது உங்களுக்கு தெரியவில்லையா? என்றார், தியாகராஜர்.

த்வைதமு சுகமா? ... என்ற சித்திரவதை எனக்குத் தெரியவே தெரியாது. சேர்வது, பிரிவது, கலப்பது, சேர்ந்தே இருப்பது, என்ற சித்திரவதை ராமனுக்குத் தெரியுமானால், அவனை உங்களுக்குச் சொல்லட்டும் என்றார்?

இதனால் தான், பிரிவது சுகமா?, கலப்பதே சுகமா? தனியாக இருப்பதே சுகமா?, என்பதை ராமனையே கேட்டுப் பாடினார், என்பதை எல்லோரும் உணர்ந்தனர்.

கல்யாணமாகாதவர்களுக்கே சுகத்தைப் பற்றிய வியாக்கியானங்கள் மிக சுகம். எனக்கும் சீதாவுக்கும், கல்யாணம் ஆகாதவர்கள் சொல்லுகின்ற எல்லாத் தத்துவங்களும் சுவையே அல்ல. அவைகள், எல்லாம் சித்திரவதையும் வற்றல் கொழும்பையும் போன்ற தே.

பசுமையான கத்திரிக்காயையும், சுண்டைக்காயையும் பசுமையாக அனுபவிப்பதற்கு வாய்ப்பு இருக்கிறதே. அதை விடுத்து அவைகளைக் காய வைத்து பிறகு புளி கரைத்து, அதிலே போட்டு கொழும்பாக்கி வற்றல் கொழும்பு என்ற அத்வைதமே சுகம் என்று த்வைதத்தை சித்ரவதை செய்வானேன்?

ஜூரம் அடித்து ஓய்ந்து, எழுந்தவனுக்கே நாக்கு ருசி தெரியாமல் செத்துக்கிடக்கும், அவனுக்குத்தான் நாக்கின் சுவை தெரிய புளிப்பான வற்றக்குழம்பைப் போடுவார்கள்

“ராமா” என்ற நாமத்தின் சுவை தெரிந்த தியாகப் பிரம்மத்தின் சுவை செத்து வாழவில்லை. அதனால் கல்யாணமாகாதவர்களுக்கும் கடவுளுக்கும் மட்டுமே த்வைத அத்வைத சண்டை இருக்கட்டும்.

எனக்கு சித்திரவதையும் வேண்டாம். வற்றல் குழம்பும் வேண்டாம் என்றார் தியாகப் பிரம்மம்.

“ஞானி”—நெருர் சதாசிவ பிரம்மமேந்திரர்



## Cultural Scene in Bombay

By

DR. SULOCHANA RAJENDRAN

An era in dance 'renaissance' came to an end with the passing away of the non-egenarian Natyacharya T. P. Kuppiah Pillai in July last. It was jathis he was lisping and adavus he was improvising till the last. During the last days, he became too weak to even whisper but solkattus flowed clear in tone and diction.

A father figure among dance Gurus, he built along with his son, son-in-law and daughter, the renowned Sri Rajarajeswari Bharata Natya Kala Mandir in Bombay which has become a household name all over. In these times of controversies, populism and perversity against purity and perfection, glamour versus grace, this premier institution, nurtured under his guidance, has been following its own path to maintain the rigour and vigour of this art avoiding the pitfalls of puerility and passivity inherent in the adherence to classicism, convention and orthodoxy.

A shining example of humility and modesty, he was a strict disciplinarian. He would brook no short-cuts and firmly believed in the adage, "Bharatham paththu varuzham" (a rigorous decade at least before stepping on to the stage). The first Natyacharya to be honoured by the Sangeet Natak Akademy with Fellowship in 1980 Bharata Vidwan Kuppiah Pillai was agile even at such an old age. He was never bereft of the charm and grace of a coy dancer. A twinkle in his eye, a flexion on his face would set him

off on an excursion into emotions. A mischievous Krishna teasing the gopis or a nayika pining for her lord, a devotee imploring with his heart-rending evocations at his Ishta Devta's sanctum sanctorum—he transformed himself into the character with an impeccable ease. His contribution to posterity was Kamala Chakram, a ready reckoner of the Talas.

The Swati Tirunal Kalakshetram came out this time with an all stalwarts fare on the music front, serving rasikas wish choice fare of music from veteran Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, his loyal chela V. Subramaniam, the stalwart of the Musiri school, T. K. Govinda Rao, and a veritable jugalbandi of Carnatic and Hindustani music by Muthusubramaniam and Jitendra Abhisheki using the Hindustani compositions of the royal composer. And it was certainly a hit in that the Kalakshetram was able to project a threefold phase of musical evolution - the all-time grandeur of the tradition - steeped music, the rich yields an erudite mind could reap by enduring sadhaka and a prospective avenue opened up for the better appreciation and understanding of one system by votaries and rasikas of the other. This also registered a base for an integrated system that could coexist with the existing two.

Veteran Semmangudi's was a memorable recital as he engrossed himself in evocative gusto giving the oft-heard repertoire an

original touch and flash that sustained their resplendence. Among the compositions he interpreted "Tyagaraja Yoga Vaibhavam" (Ananda Bhairavi) upheld the grandeur of Sahityabhava finely woven into the melodic designs: "Anjaneya Raghurama Dhoota" (Saveri) and "Parthasaratini Sevimpā" (Yadukula Khambhaji) made rare musical salutation; and the Bhairavi Swarajathi "Kamakshi" bristled with a class Niraval and Swaras, reminding us of the power and pliance the master's voice had once. With the accompaniments of T. N. Krishnan (Violin) and softspoken Mridangist Mavelikkara Krishnan Kutty Nair the cutcheri rose to great heights.

Giving a larger share to the improvisatory facet, using Niraval as a plank with greater advantage where sahitya was designed on varying melodic lines covered the gamut of emotion both lyrical and melodic, T. K. Govinda Rao established that spiritually elevating music could be made. Adding authenticity and weight to it was his kriti-rendition interpreting sangathis with evocative punch. His "Santhatham (Bilahari), "Sarasakasha" (Pantuvavali), "Pahimam Ratnachala Nayaka" (Mukhari) followed by a deeply evocative Virutham were a treat in musical enunciation. T. N. Krishnan was much more soft and silken on violin than he was on other occasions and Lakshminarayanan was apt on mridangam.

It was not until a vocal jugal bandhi in its proper perspective was attempted that one could gauge the possibility of projecting the two systems of Indian music in an integrated form, for here featured the Sahitya whose interpretation in improvisation, and intonation differed much in the two systems.

Closely following the festival was T. N. Krishnan's violin duet with his daughter Viji (Bharatiya Music & Arts Society). A hectic week of accompanying had not a vee bit wore him off when he appeared donning the principal role. His daughter Viji too registered her merits and the two together carried the concert technique to an inspiring height. To the technically poised 'Raghuvara' (Pantuvavali), 'Biranabrova' (Kalyani), the soft-toned 'Janani' (Ritigowla) in a leisurely gait lent a sober contrast and 'Manavinala akinchara' (Nalinakanthi) with orchestral colour added yet another facet to the duet.

Palghat Raghu's brilliant Thani lifted the Sahana Pallavi that would otherwise have been a training exercise in Ragam Thanam, Pallavi.

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During the past year and a half, an artiste to be regularly featured in the city concerts either in solo or as accompanist is Lalgudi Jayaraman and he has never disappointed his rasikas. His has of late become a 'divine melody' and 'sublime music'. And one such experience was at the Shanmukhananda Sabha recently when he too duetted with his son G. J. R. Krishnan. From start to finish it was an experience worth cherishing long. With soft bowing and subtle modulation Lalgudi virtually made the violin 'sing'. Hamsadhawani, Kanada, Varali, Ananda Bhairavi Simendramadhyamam—each had a felicity all its own.

No less original in skill and artistry, the 'second fiddle' was a well-refined chip of the old block. Radhakrishnan's Madhyamavathi was expressive of his maturity and originality. Ramabhadran - Nagarajan's Mridangam-Kanjira combine gave an embellishing rhythmic support.



The lilting melody of Lalgudi was heard in the Music Triangle's mid-year series during October and in the Bhaktha Rasika Ranjani Sabha. Currently he is sending his rasikas into raptures in the Shanmukha-nanda Annual Festival.

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"Kaiyilendi seeraatti paalootti thaalatta nee Enathavam seydanai....." A chill runs through your spine as you see the singer lost in the evocative charm of Kapi and the soulful adoration, implicit in the lyrics, quite unmindful of his own physical handicap-yes, that is the 35-years' old limbless 'child' S.R. Krishnamurthy. It needed the commemorative Year for the Handicapped to recognise and put him on the concert front. As observed by the great GBS, "the worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them but to be indifferent to them." Neglected in his home town and cold-shouldered by the 'capital' city of Carnatic music, this artiste's struggle against indifferent 'human elements' had been much more harrowing than the physical handicap he had to overcome.

For not having limbs, he seeks no support for keeping time. And with fine aesthetic sensitivity he communicated in a melodious voice at a number of concerts the city sabhas had arranged during early

August. He has a well-kept "paataanthara" of the Alathur school and sang with a certain abandon and relish. His rendering of "Narayana" (Suddha Dhan-yasi), "Chalu Chalu" (Saveri), "Needu a Paadame gathi" (Pantuvarali), "Adigi Sukhama" (Madhyamavathi) and "Maya mma" (Ahiri) were poignantly textured. Veeraraghavan and T. K. Moorthy gave ample support on the violin and mridangam respectively. He was overwhelmed with the response he had in Bombay.

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A shot in the arm it was to "Samgeetha" when it presented in its September fare an unassuming local Vidwan-cum-teacher, N.S. Chandrashekar who seemed to have a veritable treasure of the 'old' that is 'gold'. The gems from his pack shone brilliantly in their structural elegance and lyrical grandeur. "Enneramum Un Naamam" (PURVI KALYANI) and "Karunanidhi" (Todi) were real 'Nidhis' of Syama Sastri bestowed on posterity. The different strides he manoeuvred in the Chittaswara gave the oft-heard orchestral "Raghuvamsha" a new vocal face-lift. Dikshitar's "Sri Raja Rajarajeshwari" (Purnachandrika) was another gem to glow in its brilliance.

K. Shivakumar and T.K. Ramakrishnan made an ideal Violin-Mridangam accompanying pair.

—o—

**ERRATA**—The name of the author of the article "New Trinity" which was published in our July issue should read as "T. T. Srinivasan" and not T. R. Srinivasan.

## Paris Autumn Art Festival 1981

(From a Correspondent)

Perhaps for the first time, South Indian classical music and classical dancing were given a magnificent chance to participate in the Annual Autumn Art Festival held at Paris in September - October 1981 on a really worth-while scale. The Indian Council of Cultural Affairs the National Tourism Department, Air France and Franchise Action Artistique collaborated. Sri Y. G. Doraiswami, acting as *Conseiller artistique pour le programme music et danse* and the Madras Correspondent Nadine Berardi, selected the representatives for the festival viz., Flute Dr. N. Ramani, Rama Ravi, D. K. Jayaraman, K. P. Sivanandan and Sarada (Veena) and Anayampatti S. Dandapani, Jalatarangam. The accompaniments were in the hands of Messrs. Umayalpuram Sivaraman, Mrs. T. Rukmani, Kum. Kanyakumari, Tanjore Upendran, Ramachar (Kanjira). For Dance, the following: Smt. Vijayantimala Bali (Bharata Natyam), Malavika Sarukkai (Odissi), Smt. Kalanidhi Narayanan (Abhinaya), Kalamandalam Groupe (Mohini Attam), Kerala Kalamandalam (Kathakali) - quite a large and almost representative cross-section of South Indian Art. Flute Dr. Ramani gave 3 performances, D. K. Jayaraman, a few more. Similarly, with the dances. Even a Tala Vadya Kucheri was included in the fare presented. The recitals were held mostly at the Chapelle de la Sorbonne, Paris., and each was of almost 3 hours' duration as in India. That duration was not beyond the threshold of tolerance for a Parisian.

The music and dance recitals were all very popular among the Parisians and estimates of the attendance do not place it below 500 - which is a great thing indeed. Further, the audiences were almost 100% Parisian - unlike "American audiences" which very often are neither truly American nor even an audience worth speaking of, as they usually consist of Indians alone.

France's interest in our culture, as seen from the very flattering size of the crowds that attended the concerts, was certainly an eye-opener. This impression only confirms what Clare Luce once said: "The gamut that the human mind, heart and soul can run is wider perhaps in France than in any other country". The visiting troupe were well treated by the hosts. Every member has returned to India with happy impressions. This again is another reflection of the hospitality of the French people and their large-heartedness in matters of Art.

According to Dr. N. Ramani, the eminent flautist, the French audience's reactions to South Indian Classical music were very interesting. First, listeners stayed right till the end of each recital and in fact, demand for "encores" was very common. Smt. Vijayantimala Bali had to respond to the "encore" call, even though the Dance was over and the traditional Mangalam had been sung too!

Secondly, lively interest was taken in the Kritis, Swaras and the rhythmic Duets; and one could even sense from the atmosphere



that they were keen on real classical stuff, truly Indian. It is a sobering thought that by contrast, in India, the trend is towards light music !

Thirdly, the Parisians' interest in Raga Alapana as such seemed to be not as well sustained as in the other items of the music. Apparently, they could better appreciate music which has gait and movement and rhythmic dynamics too, like our Kritis and Pallavis. The inability to fully appreciate the ethos of raga alapana, though we may shout from the housetops to the whole world that it is our peculiar contribution to world music (even in India, the North Indian and South Indian systems have

many divergences), may have its explanation in this : Comprehension of raga alapana is predicated on a knowledge of the notes of the scale of each raga, its gamakas and the permutations and combinations effected with them, to produce appropriate moods. This can certainly tax any foreigner's understanding, unless he is trained to understand it. Even in India, listeners are allergic to new ragas, apart from the traditional 30 or 40 ragas.

Well, the gains of this cultural teams' visit are overwhelming and perhaps the way has been opened for a more frequent interchange of visits by musicians and dancers of the two countries.

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#### FORM IV

(See Rule 8 of Press & Registration of Books Act)

1. Place of its Publication ... Plot 292, Jayshankar Yagnik Marg, Bombay-400 002.
2. Periodicity of its Publication ... Quarterly.
3. Printer's Name ... Rajan & Co. (Printers)  
No. 1, Goomes Street, Madras-600 001.
4. Publisher's Name ... R. V. Murthy.  
Nationality ... Indian  
Address ... Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, Bombay-400 022
5. Editor's Name ... K. S. Mahadevan.  
Nationality ... Indian.  
Address ... Plot 30, Krishnapuri  
Raja Annamalaipuram Madras-600028
6. Name and address of individuals who own the newspaper and partner or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital. ... Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, Plot 292, Jayshankar Yagnik Marg, Bombay-400 022.

I, R. V. Murthy, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(Sd.) R. V. Murthy  
Signature of Publisher.

### Palaghat Mani Iyer Memorial Art Center BANGALORE.

An institute dedicated to the study of musical arts and sciences, to perpetuate the ever lasting memory of the all-time-great Mridangam maestro Palghat T. S. Mani Iyer, was inaugurated by Sri S. Y. Krishnaswamy, who also unveiled a big portrait of Mani Iyer at the auditorium of Kannada Sahitya Parishat, in Bangalore on Vijayadasami 8-10-81. After a prayer 'Gajananayutham' rendered by Kum. Kalavathy, messages wishing the function success and recalling the memory of Mani Iyer were read by Kum T. S. Sathavathi. Bangalore K. Venkataram, Founder Director of the Art Center, in his welcome address explained the aims and objects of the Center which include publication of booklets and information on different apoorva thalas and laya, arranging concerts, lecture demonstrations and study-circles by experts to educate the students on the scope and limitations of Laya/Thala in music, collecting recordings of laya vinyasas of great Laya artistes for the use of deserving students, publishing booklets on different musical instruments and academic topics, organis-

ing free-studentships and scholarships to deserving students etc.

Sri S. Y. Krishnaswami observed that Mani Iyer introduced several combinations in his mridangam play, unheard of earlier and said that Mani played music on mridangam, while others play mridangam for music. Others who spoke on the contribution of Mani Iyer were Dr. V. Dore-swamy Iyengar, Vidwan A. Subba Rao, Sri B. V. K. Sastry, who appreciated the noble venture and suggested creation of new rhythmic compositions suited to percussives as in western music. All the speakers eulogistically spoke on the achievements of Ghatam K. S. Manjunathan who was also felicitated on the occasion. Excerpts of Mani Iyer accompanying Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar with Palani Subramanya Pillai on Kanjira were played. The programme was largely attended and was a success.

*This is the first music centre established to commemorate his invaluable services to Carnatic music—[Ed].*

—o—

Edited by K. S. Mahadevan, printed and published by R. V. Murthy for Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha, Bombay-400 022.  
Printed at Rajan & Co. (Printers) 1, Goomes Street, Madras-600 001.  
Registered with Registrar of Newspapers for India No. R. N. 2793/875.



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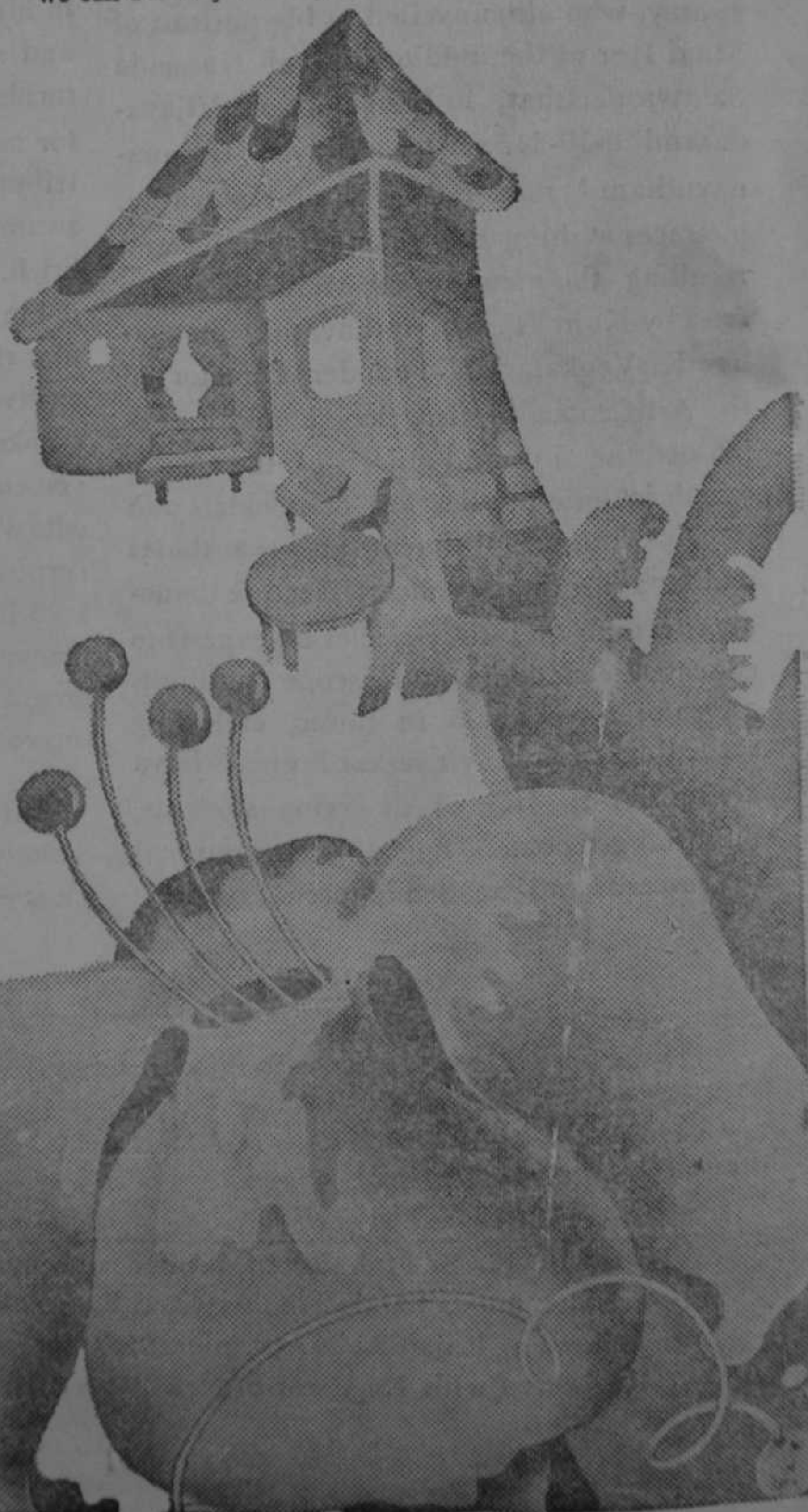
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**OCTOBER 1981**

**MUSIC - DANCE - DRAMA FESTIVAL**

IN AID OF

**Sabha's Educational Activities & Medical Centre**

PROGRAMME (D. V.)

29-10-81  
8-00 P.M.

Smt. CHITRA VISWESWARAN & PARTY

— Dance Ballet  
— Devi -  
— Ashtaragamalik

30-10-81  
8-00 P.M.

Dr. S. RAMANATHAN  
Lalgudi Shri JAYARAMAN  
Umayalpuram Shri K. SIVARAMAN

— Vocal  
— Violin \*  
— Mridangam

31-10-81  
7-00 P.M.

Maharajapuram Shri SANTHANAM  
Lalgudi Shri JAYARAMAN  
Umayalpuram Shri K. SIVARAMAN

— Vocal  
— Violin  
— Mridangam

**Dramas By M/s. Kala Nilayam, Madras**

1-11-81  
6-00 P.M.

" WASHINGTONIL THIRUMANAM "  
By Savi

— Tamil Drama

2-11-81  
8-00 P.M.

" SKYLAB SAMMANDHI "  
By Marina

— Tamil Drama

3-11-81  
8-00 P.M.

EDHUKU ? IRUKATUME !

— Tamil Drama

4-11-81  
8-00 P.M.

RADHA & JAYALAKSHMI & PARTY

— Vocal

5-11-81  
8-00 P.M.

TABASSUM HITPARADE  
(Tamil, Malayalam, Hindi & Marathi Songs)

— Light Music

**Dramas By M/s. Shanthi Niketan, Madras**

6-11-81  
8-00 P.M.

" SATYA PEEDAM "

— Tamil Drama

7-11-81  
7-00 P.M.

" MUDHAL MARIYADAI "

— Tamil Drama

8-11-81  
6.00 P.M.

" IMAYAM "

— Tamil Drama

E. R. R. Chari  
V. H. Jayarao  
Hon. Secretaries